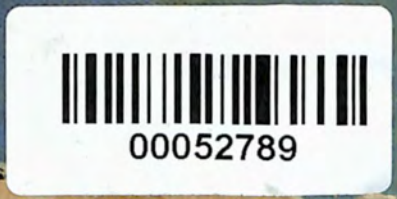
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EVA, A TRUE STORY,

OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS;

THE ILL-OMENED MARRIAGE,

AND

52789

OTHER TALES & POEMS.

B 207

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"EUGENE ARAM," "RIENZI," ETC.

Third Edition.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.

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PREFACE.

In regarding the general mould and spirit of our more recent poetry, nothing is more obvious than that, while the works of Byron and Scott still command the circulation which is the surest token of their popularity with the reading Many, the imitators of their peculiar attributes have gradually passed away ;—yielding to the influence which Wordsworth and Shelley have, year by year, more and more visibly exercised upon the poetical taste and temper of the rhyming Few.

But while, on the one hand, the pure and

devotional spirit of Wordsworth has often served to elevate the tone of the disciples to whose reverence he is so justly entitled—while, on the other, the more ornate and dazzling genius of Shelley has often lighted his followers to daring and original beauties of imagery and expression, —it may be a question how far the admiration of either poet has not tended to the separation of Poetry itself from that Popular Audience it was once wont to command. In Shelley abstract Imagination, in Wordsworth serene Philosophy predominates; and with those whom the genius of either pervades and colours, imagination not unfrequently passes into phantasy, and philosophy into musing;—while it may, perhaps, be conceded that the splendour of the one, the simplicity of the other, has led, by different paths, to the common result of quaintness and affectation of style—often disguising from the common reader the extraordinary merits by

which, in their brilliant disciples, such defects are contrasted and atoned.

Undoubtedly, if the Author had the inclination, he has not the power, to attempt a rivalry with contemporaries, whom the love of these "two masters of eternal song" has conducted to a reputation too hardly won not to be endeared to those who can sympathize with the struggles of genius against the time, and value efforts for the elevation of the human intellect into that noblest region over which Poetry presides, without reference to the fallacious test of the day's applause.

The Poems now submitted to the public have been chiefly composed with a more humble ambition, and in a class of poetry, eminently national, indeed, but long neglected and disused;—a poetry demanding neither "the ethereal thought" of Wordsworth, nor the "mighty line" of Shelley—a poetry addressing itself rather to

the heart than the intellect, and seeking appeals to familiar emotion in succinct and simple narrative or direct and positive picture.*

Without affecting to escape some portion of that mannerism of style which must, more or less, pervade all works of the same age, however differing in quality or degree, and from which the violent effort to free ourselves only tends

* As (if the Author may be pardoned for illustrating the distinction he here takes) in the one view, have been composed—the tales of "Eva," "The Ill-omened Marriage," "Bayard," "The Fairy Bride," &c.—in the other, such poems as "Mazarin," "André Chenier," "The Dead Queen," &c. A few of the poems in the volume do not, of course, come under either of these heads.

One word about the longest tale in this collection, "The Ill-Omened Marriage." Those accustomed to imagine that the spirit of our antient Poets is only caught by the imitation of their phraseology or diction, may little understand the Author when he states, that it was to the study of some of the earliest poems, which pleased our Norman and Saxon Fathers, that a tale of modern

to distortion and extravagance,—the Author must confess that his own taste and theories of composition rather incline him to laws and usages of versification and diction from which the younger Poets of the present day seem to make it a merit to depart. Perhaps, however, if there be anything original in the mind and conceptions of a writer, no matter whether the medium employed

character and life, conveyed in the language of modern times, owes its origin. For the poems referred to, such as "The Grey Palfrey," "Griselda," &c., take their interest from appeals to simple and domestic feelings, in the course of a narrative characterized by the manners and habits of the time in which it was composed. Such poems are, in fact, (what the "Ill-omened Marriage" aims at being,) *Domestic Novels, in Verse*, rather than members of the larger class of *Romaunt* or *Ballad*. For a tale of this kind, adapted to our own age, a certain variety of style, that may often seem abrupt in its changes, is perhaps no less requisite in verse than in prose. And for whatever may at first seem unfamiliar in this peculiarity, the candid Reader will no doubt make sufficient allowance.

be verse or prose, it will place its own stamp upon his labours, not the less from the absence of all *struggle* for originality in the outward and verbal mechanism: For the Thought is the Muse, the Versification but her dress.

It is impossible for the writer not to be fully aware of all the disadvantages under which he labours, in the hazard he now adventures,—not only in common with his more gifted brethren in the practical and busy character of the times,—but in the natural reluctance, even of the Impartial, to allow merit in Verse, to one whom they have been long accustomed to meet in the less lofty element of Prose;—a reluctance strengthened and justified by the remembrance of the worthless rhymings of his youth, for which (it may be in vain, and unheeded) his manhood offers this atonement. And yet, whatever be the fate of this volume (the labour of his love)—if censure now and neglect

hereafter, the Author can never regret that brief return into earlier and happier life which it is the privilege of Poetry to bestow. The flower of every man's mind is the poetical part of it; and this slight publication, whatever its demerits, comprises in itself the ripest and less imperfect forms yet vouchsafed to *him*, whom, at least, it has often beguiled and soothed,—of the fancies or ideas which make the calm, Philosophers, and the restless—only Authors!

May 1, 1842.

NOTE.—If it be necessary to apologize for not having placed the longer Poems, from which the Volume takes its title, in due and customary order at the commencement, the author can give no better excuse, than that derived from the feeling of dread and reluctance with which he himself, no doubt in common with many others, has always encountered a series of long poems at the very onset of a volume, by a Poet in whose genius he has not perfect confidence,—whereas, if not displeased by the foretaste of a few poems of less formidable aspect, the Reader, growing gradually accustomed to the Author, glides, peradventure, unawares, into the attention he might have refused to give to the presumption of a direct and lengthened demand upon it.

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MAZARIN.

(THE WORLD WITHOUT.)

I WAS walking some days after, in the new apartments of his palace. I recognised the approach of the Cardinal (Mazarin) by the sound of his slippered feet, which he dragged one after the other, as a man enfeebled by a mortal malady. I concealed myself behind the tapestry, and I heard him say—"*Il faut quitter tout celà!*" ("I must leave all that!") He stopped at every step, for he was very feeble, and casting his eyes on each object that attracted him, he sighed forth, as from the bottom of his heart, "*Il faut quitter tout celà!* What pains have I taken to acquire these things! Can I abandon them without regret? I shall never see them more where I am about to go!" &c.—*Mémoires inédits de Louis Henri, Comte de Brienne. Barrière's Edition*, vol. ii. p. 115.

IT was a vaulted gallery, where, in long and
gleaming rows,
The statues stood like gods, whose life is glory
and—repose;
And on the walls the canvass glowed from many
a gorgeous frame;
What misers are we to the toil, what spendthrifts
to the name!

Through silent air, with silver light, the steadfast tapers shone
Upon the Painter's pomp of hues, the Sculptor's solemn stone.
Saved from the flood of Time, within that Ark ye seem'd to view
The Sons of Art's departed world, the Fathers of its new.
Along that gallery feebly sounds a footfall on the floor,—
The old and dying man is come to count his treasures o'er;—
An old and dying Man amidst the ever-living Art;
God's truth! it were a sight to stir some pining painter's heart;
It were a sight to lift the soul of Genius from the Hour,
To see the life of Genius smile upon the death of Power!
That old and dying man is lord of all his eyes survey,
That meagre hand as yet can sign a thousand lives away;

The Roman purple hides the worm that gnaws
the heart within,
And Church and State, he guides them both, the
puissant Mazarin!
Yet more than Church, and more than State, the
Italian prized, I fear,
The Art in which his Mother-Land yet murmured
to his ear.
So, with a feeble footfall, now, he crawls along the
floor,
A dying man, who ere he dies, would count his
treasures o'er.
And from the sunny landscape smiled the soul of
sweet Lorraine,
And from the deeps of Raphael rose celestial
Love again;
And, bright in gorgeous-coloured pomp, the hag-
gard owner sees,
Thy banquet-halls and cloth of gold, thou stately
Veronese.
While calm and stern amidst the blaze of wonders
not their own,
The gods of Greece stand group'd around their
old Olympian's throne.

There, Hermes ever seems from earth on winged
feet to rise;—
There, ever in the Serpent's fold Laocoon death-
less dies;
There, startled from her forest-lair, young Dian
turns to draw
The arrowy death that waits the heart the god
has fail'd to awe.
There, earth subdued, the monster slain, and every
labour done,
Stands, sad as Worth with mortal fame, Alcmena's
mournful son.*
They gaze upon the fading form with mute im-
mortal eyes;
The neighbour of the charnel girt with strangers
from the skies.
And slowly as he tottered by, the old man, unre-
sign'd,
Sigh'd forth, "And must I die, and leave this
pleasant world behind;

* Aristotle classes Hercules amongst the melancholy. (Arist. Prob. 30.) And it is the expression of melancholy repose combined with colossal power, which gives so sublime a sentiment to the Farnese statue.

My power, my state, my wealth, my pomp, my galleries and my halls?"
Still, while he sigh'd, the' Eternal Art smiled on him from the walls.
And as at last the dying man crept feebly to the porch,
He saw the Silent Genius* stand, and lower the darken'd torch!

ANDRÉ CHENIER.

(THE WORLD WITHIN.)

ANDRÉ CHENIER, the original of whatever is truest to nature and genuine passion in the modern poetry of France, died by the guillotine, July 27, 1794. In ascending the scaffold he cried—"*To die so young!*"—"*And there was something here!*" he added, striking his forehead, not in the fear of death, but the despair of genius! *See* THIERS, vol. iv. p. 83.

IT was within the prison's gloom, the dreary night before
The morn in which the dungeon earth shall wall the soul no more,

* The statue of the Greek Genius of Death.

And there, alone, the musing man whom Power
had doom'd to die,
In silence fill'd the cell with dreams of happy
days gone by.
On blacken'd walls and rugged floors, and through
the sullen bars,
With eyes that spoke of heavenly things, soft
shone the summer stars.
Fair to the martyr-poet's gaze, within that iron
gloom,
The Eden lost on earth arose in melody and
bloom.
To grace those walls he needed not the canvass
and the stone,
A god itself, his GENIUS saw Olympus round its
throne;
The visions Poets only know took living shape,
and smil'd
Upon the sentenced captive, as upon the cradled
child.
He saw the long procession sweep of those sub-
limer things
Which Youth had hoped that Time should raise
from Song's enchanted springs,—

Those forms of light that from the lyre and from
the poet's hymn,
As from a native heaven break forth—melodious
seraphim!*
So there, forgetful of the morn, upon the dungeon
floor
He sate, the doomèd man, to count the wealth of
genius o'er—
To count the kingly hoards of thought, majestic
and sublime,
That lay—if God would spare the life—within
the mines of time.
He sees the work that should outlive the marble
and the hues
On which for many a weary year has toil'd the
holy muse.
He sees it rise to ripen'd shape, a Venus from the
sea,
And to another form from heaven Devotion bends
the knee.

* "Aus den Saiten, wie aus ihren Himmeln
Neugebor 'ne Seraphim." — SCHILLER.

He sees his statue rear'd amidst the hero-gods of fame;
He hears the crowd, with countless tongues, repeat the poet's name;
He hears the maid, amidst the shades of many a violet vale,
With murmur'd songs his lips had breathed make sweet the twilight gale ;—
He hears the loved of earlier hours exulting in his praise,
And lives the life that Glory lives, and sleeps beneath the bays.
Then, starting from the glowing dreams, he saw athwart the bars
The sullen dawn that chaced alike from thought and heaven the stars;
He heard the busy tramp below, the slow-unclosing doors,
The gaoler's heavy tread along the melancholy floors;
The murmur of the crowds that round the human shambles throng;
The death-cart's groaning wheel, as harsh the horror grates along.

"And must I die so soon!" sigh'd forth the young man, unresign'd,
"And leave this pleasant world before a name is left behind?
I feel the glorious SOMETHING stir within my burning brain,
That tells me what my life *could* be—a prophet, and in vain!
My power, my state—my realm, more fair than monarch ever sway'd—
The splendours of that world in time my rushing soul survey'd,—"
And while he spoke, the hinges creak'd—the gaoler oped the door—
"Come forth, and greet the sun; the night—thy last on earth—is o'er!"

BAYARD.

A TALE.

SEE, for the *naïve* and characteristic relation of the anecdote on which this poem is founded, (and which one of our standard essayists, "The Guardian," No. 17, has already made familiar to the reader,) "The right joyous and pleasant History of the Chevalier Bayard," by the Loyal Servant, vol. ii. p. 126, of the Translation published by Murray. The very slight alterations which have been here admitted, are solely in compliance with what the Author believes to be an imperative condition in the art, whether of poet or painter—viz., an avoidance of the literal fact.

LOVE ofttimes in the haughtiest knight
His easiest conquest sees;
The plume that leads the foremost fight,
The toy to every breeze.

More fair than rose at dawning day,
When May her Zephyr seeks,
The blossom of the human May,
The rose on virgin cheeks.

If Love has charms, why Wealth has power—
Her sire the slave of gold.

Alas! that for the glittering shower
The Danaë should be sold!

She stood before him at the night,
Unfriended and alone;
And o'er her charms the tempting light
From silver cressets shone.

She stood;—above her bosom's snow
The modest hands were prest,
And voiceless heaved, in ebb and flow,
The deeps within the breast.

She stood;—the ivory shoulders down
The glittering tresses stray'd,
Like light that from a martyr's crown
A halo round her made.

So fair a form in holy cell
No saint, I ween, might see;
And o'er that form his glances fell,
No saint, alas, was he!*

* "As he was no saint."—The Loyal Servant, vol. ii. p. 126.

He moved, he spoke, he knelt, he sued—
The noblest of the land;
With gentlest words the master woo'd,
And clasp'd the victim's hand!

Then o'er the marble cheek there flush'd
The hues that went and came;
And to the lip, in trembling, rush'd
The words of hope and shame.

"Oh, spare me—spare, O noble knight,
The child a sire could doom,
And leave to life the stainless light
That sanctifies the tomb!

"This morn, my eyes could greet the sun,—
Ah, shall they loathe the ray,—
To-morrow, scorn'd by every one,
Whose love approv'd to-day?

"This morn, methought the voice of prayer
The gates of heaven could ope!—
To-morrow—oh, how prays Despair,
When nought is left for Hope?

" This morn—why should I blush to speak?—
I loved—beloved again,—
Nay—not the love that fires thy cheek,
A love that could not stain!

" This hour, unconscious, sad, alone,
His lips repeat my name;
To-day his pride—to-morrow grown,
O God, into his shame!

" Before thy thousand wreaths of bay,
One leaf how poor and dim!
A thousand flowerets glad thy way,
But *I*—am all to him!

" Turn not—oh, turn not!" From her eyes
His hands his aspect hid;
Perchance the thought the speech denies,
The startled conscience chid.

Perchance, the haunted Past along,
The' accusing Memory stray'd,
And woke the pale, repentant throng,
By young Desire betray'd;

Perchance, to that blest hour the birth
Of holier thoughts was given,
And wings, no more to stoop to Earth,
Regained their native Heaven!

"No mail like innocence secure!*
Await, and tremble not;
The Angel-buckler guards the pure!"
He said—and left the spot.

The midnight hour the church-bell toll'd,—
O heart, more loud thy beat;
A step—a voice—a form—behold
Thy lover at thy feet!

"Look up—look up!—I claim my bride!
The evil days are past.
The gold my fate till now denied
Is mine—is ours at last!

* "Chè difesa miglior ch'usbergo e scudo.
E' la santa innocenza al petto ignudo."
TASSO, Ger. Lib. cant. viii.—st. xli.

"By Bayard's side my father fell,—
The son, the hero found;
And——" ere the rest his lips could tell,
They heard the bugles sound;

They heard the ringing hoofs depart;
Aloft the pennon flow'd;
And from the town, with lighter heart,
The noble Bayard rode.

PATIENCE AND HOPE.

Upon a barren steep,
Above a stormy deep,
I saw an Angel watching the wild sea;
Earth was that barren steep,
Time was that stormy deep,
And the opposing shore, Eternity!

"Why dost thou watch the wave?
Thy feet the waters lave;
The tide engulfs thee if thou dost delay."

" Unscath'd I watch the wave,
Time not the Angel's grave,—
I wait until the ocean ebbs away!"

Hush'd on the Angel's breast,
I saw an Infant rest,
Smiling upon the gloomy hell below.
" What is the Infant prest,
O Angel, to thy breast?"
" The child God gave me in the long-ago!

" Mine all upon the earth—
The angel's angel-birth,
Smiling all terror from the howling wild!"
—Never may I forget
The dream that haunts me yet,
Of PATIENCE nursing HOPE—the Angel and the Child!

EVA;

A TRUE STORY OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

THE Author has to thank an American gentleman for the beautiful story, (related also by Mr. Combe in one of his lectures,) to which this poem owes its origin.

I.

The Maiden's Home.

A COTTAGE in a peaceful vale;
A jasmine round the door;
A hill to shelter from the gale;
A silver brook before.
Oh sweet the jasmine's buds of snow,
In mornings soft with May,
And sweet in summer's silent glow,
The brooklet's merry play;
But sweeter in that lonely place
To God it must have been,
To see the Maiden's happy face
That bless'd the home within!

Without the porch, you heard at noon
A voice that sang for glee;
Or mark'd the white neck glancing down,—
The book upon the knee—

II.

The Idiot Boy.

Who stands between thee and the sun?—
A cloud himself,—the Wandering One!
A vacant wonder in the eyes,—
The mind, a blank, unwritten scroll;—
The light was in the laughing skies,
And darkness in the Idiot's soul.
He touched the book upon her knee—
He looked into her gentle face—
"Thou dost not tremble, maid, to see,
Poor Arthur by thy dwelling-place.
I know not why, but where I pass
The aged turn away;
And if my shadow vex the grass,
The children cease from play.
My only playmates are the wind,
The blossom on the bough!
Why are thy looks so soft and kind?
Thou dost not tremble—thou!"

Though none were by, she trembled not—
Too meek to wound, too good to fear him;
And, as he lingered on the spot,
She hid the tears that gush'd to hear him.—

III.

Prayer of Arthur's Father.

" O Maiden!"—thus the sire begun—
" O Maiden, do not scorn my prayer:
I have a hapless idiot-son,
To all my wealth the only heir;
And day by day, in shine or rain,
He wanders forth, to gaze again
Upon those eyes, whose looks of kindness
Still haunt him in his world of blindness.
A sunless world!—all arts to yield
Light to the mind from Childhood seal'd
Have been explored in vain.
Few are his joys on earth;—above,
For every ill a cure is given—
God grant me life to cheer with love,
The wanderer's guileless path to Heaven."
He paused—his heart was full—" And now,
What brings the suppliant father here?
Yes, few the joys that life bestows
On him whose life is but repose—
One night, from year to year;—
Yet not so dark, O maid, if thou
Couldst bear that harmless joy to see,
Which smiles the shadow from his face,

When ear can catch or eye can trace
A tone—a glimpse—of thee;—
The mournful presence couldst endure,
Nor shun the steps thy looks allure,—
Couldst"——Eva's father, from her brow
Parted the golden locks, descending
To veil the sweet face, downwards bending,
And, pointing to the swimming eyes,
The dew-drops glist'ning on the cheek,
"Mourner!" *the happier* father cries,
"These tears her answer speak!"

Oh, sweet the jasmine's buds of snow,
In mornings soft with May;
And sweet in summer's silent glow,
The brooklet's merry play;—
But sweeter, in that lonely place,
To God it must have been
The soul that lit the maiden's face—
Soul watching Soul within.

IV.

The Young Teacher.

Of wonders on the land and deeps
She spoke, and glories in the sky—
The Eternal life the Father keeps,
For those who learn from Him to die.

So simply did the maiden speak—
So simply and so earnestly,
You saw the light begin to break,
And Soul the Heaven to see;
You saw how slowly, day by day,
The darksome waters caught the ray,
Confused and broken—come and gone—
The beams as yet uncertain are,
But still the billows murmur on,
And struggle for the star.

V.

The Stranger-Suitor.

There came to Eva's maiden home
A Stranger from a sunnier clime;
The lore that Hellas taught to Rome,
The wealth that Wisdom works from Time,
Which ever in its ebb and flow,
Heaves to the seeker on the shore
The waifs of glorious wrecks below—
The argosies of yore;—
Each gem that in that dark profound
The Past,—the Student's soul can find;
Shone from his thought, and sparkled round
The Enchanted Palace of the Mind.

In man's best years, his form was fair,
Broad brow with hyacinth locks of hair;
A port, though stately, not severe;
An eye that could the heart control;
A voice whose music to the ear,
Became a memory to the soul.
It seem'd as Nature's hand had done
Her most to mould her kingly son;
But oft beneath the sunlit Nile
The grim destroyer waits its prey,
And dark below that fatal smile,
The lurking demon lay.

How trustful in the leafy June,
She roved with him the lonely vale;
How trustful by the tender moon,
She blush'd to hear a tenderer tale.
O happy Earth! the dawn revives,
Day after day, each drooping flower—
Time to the heart *once* only gives
The joyous Morning-Hour.
" To him—oh, wilt thou pledge thy youth,
For whom the world's false bloom is o'er?
My heart shall haven in thy truth,
And tempt the faithless wave no more.

In my far land, a sun more bright
Sheds rose-hues o'er a tideless sea;
But cold the wave, and dull the light,
Without the sunshine found in thee.
Say, wilt thou come, the Stranger's bride,
To that bright land and tideless sea?
There is no sun but by thy side—
My life's whole sunshine smiles in thee!"

Her hand lay trembling on his arm,
Averted glow'd the happy face;
A softer hue, a mightier charm,
Grew mellowing o'er the hour—the place;
Along the breathing woodlands moved
A PRESENCE dream-like and divine—
How sweet to love and be beloved,
To lean upon a heart that's thine!
Silence was o'er the earth and sky—
By silence Love is answered best—
Her answer was the downcast eye,
The rose-cheek pillow'd on his breast.
What rustles through the moonlit brake?
What sudden spectre meets their gaze?
What face, the hues of life forsake,
Gleams ghost-like in the ghostly rays?

You might have heard his heart that beat,
So heaving rose its heavy swell—
No more the Idiot—at her feet,
The Dark One, roused to reason, fell.
Loos'd the last link that thrall'd the thought,
The lightning broke upon the blind—
The jealous love the cure had wrought,
The Heart in waking woke the Mind.

VI.

The Marriage.

To and fro the church bell swinging,
Cheerily, clearly, to and fro;
Gaily go the young girls bringing
Flowers the fairest June may know.
Maiden, flowers that bloom'd and perished
Strew'd thy path the bridal day;
May the Hope thy soul has cherished,
Bloom when these are past away!

The Father's parting prayer is said,
The daughter's parting kiss is given;
The tears a happy bride may shed,
Like sun-showers scarcely cloud her heaven;
Or *if* a cloud,—how soon appears
An Iris calling smiles from tears!

VII.

The Hermit.

Years fly; beneath the yew-tree's shade
Thy father's holy dust is laid;
The brook glides on, the jasmine blows;
But where art thou, the wandering wife,
And what the bliss, and what the woes,
Glass'd in the mirror-sleep of life?
For whether life may laugh or weep,
Death the true waking—life the sleep.
None know! afar, unheard, unseen—
The present heeds not what has been.
Whirl'd in the gulf that thunders on,
The floating raft forgets the gone.
But all, perchance, *one* heart may find,
Where Memory lives, a saint enshrin'd—
Some altar-hearth, in which our shade
The Household-god of Thought is made;
And each slight relic hoarded yet
With faith more solemn than regret.
Who tenants thy forsaken cot—
Who tends thy childhood's favourite flowers—
Who wakes, from every haunted spot,
The Ghosts of vanish'd Hours?
'Tis He whose sense was doom'd to borrow
From thee the Vision and the Sorrow—

To whom the Reason's golden ray,
In the Heart's Anguish-storm was given;
The peal that rent the clouds away
Left clear the silent face of heaven!
And wealth was his, and gentle birth,
A form in fair proportions cast;
But lonely still he walk'd the earth—
The Hermit of the Past.
It was not love—that dream was o'er!
No stormy grief, no wild emotion;
For oft, what once was Love of yore,
The Memory soothes into Devotion!
He bought the cot:—The garden flowers—
The haunts his Eva's steps had trod,
Books—thought—beguiled the lonely hours,
That flow'd in peaceful waves to God.

VIII.

Desertion.

She sits, a Statue of Despair,
In that far land, by that bright sea;
She sits, a Statue of Despair,
Whose smile an Angel seem'd to be—
An angel that could never die,
Its home the heaven of that blue eye!

The smile is gone for ever there—
She sits, the Statue of Despair!
She knows it all—the hideous tale—
The wrong, the perjury, and the shame;—
Before the bride had left her vale,
Another bore the nuptial name;
Another lives to claim the hand
Whose clasp, the while it thrill'd, defiled:
Another lives, O God, to brand
The Bastard's curse upon her child!
ANOTHER!—through all space she saw
The face that mock'd the unwedded mother's!
In every voice she heard the Law,
That cried, "Thou hast usurp'd another's!"
And who the horror first had told?—
From *his* false lips in scorn it came—
"Thy charms grow dim, my love grows cold;
My sails are spread—Farewell."
Rigid in voiceless marble there—
Come, sculptor, come—behold Despair!

The infant woke from feverish rest—
Its smile she sees, its voice she hears—
The marble melted from the breast,
And all the Mother gush'd in tears.

IX.

The Infant-Burial.

To and fro the church-bell swinging,
Heavily heaving to and fro;
Sadly go the mourners, bringing
Dust to join the dust below.
Through the church-aisle, lighted dim,
Chaunted knells the ghostly hymn,
Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæclum in favillâ!
Mother! flowers that bloom'd and perish'd
Strew'd thy path the bridal day;
Now the bud thy grief has cherish'd,
With the rest has pass'd away!
Leaf that fadeth—bud that bloometh,
Mingled there, must wait the day
When the seed the grave entombeth
Bursts to glory from the clay.
Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæclum in favillâ!
Happy are the old that die,
With the sins of life repented;
Happier they whose parting sigh
Breaks a heart, from sin prevented!

Let the earth thine infant cover
From the cares the living know;
Happier than the guilty lover—
Memory is at rest below!
Memory, like a fiend, shall follow,
Night and day, the steps of Crime;
Hark! the church-bell, dull and hollow,
Shakes another sand from time!
Through the church-aisle, lighted dim,
Chaunted knells the ghostly hymn;
Hear it, False One, where thou fliest,
Shriek to hear it when thou diest—
Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæclum in favillâ!

X.

The Return.

The cottage in the peaceful vale,
The jasmine round the door,
The hill still shelters from the gale,
The brook still glides before.

Without the porch, one summer noon,
The Hermit-dweller see!
In musing silence bending down,
The book upon his knee.

Who stands between thee and the sun?—
A cloud herself,—the Wand'ring One!—
A vacant sadness in the eyes,
  The mind a raz'd, defeatured scroll;
The light is in the laughing skies,
  And darkness, Eva, in thy soul!
The beacon shaken in the storm,
  Had struggled still to gleam above
  The last sad wreck of human love,
Upon the dying child to shed
One ray—extinguish'd with the dead:
O'er earth and heaven then rush'd the night!
  A wandering dream, a mindless form—
A Star hurl'd headlong from its height,
Guideless its course, and quench'd its light.
Yet still the native instinct stirr'd
  The darkness of the breast—
She flies, as flies the wounded bird,
  Unto the distant nest.
O'er hill and waste, from land to land,
  Her heart the faithful instinct bore;
And there, behold the Wanderer stand
  Beside her Childhood's Home once more!

X.

Light and Darkness.

When earth is fair, and winds are still,
When sunset gilds the western hill,
Oft by the porch, with jasmine sweet,
Or by the brook, with noiseless feet,
Two silent forms are seen;
So silent they—the place so lone—
They seem like souls, when life is gone,
That haunt where life has been:
And his to watch, as in the past
Her soul had watch'd his soul.
Alas! *her* darkness waits the last,
The grave, the only goal!
It is not what the leech can cure—
An erring chord, a jarring madness:
A calm so deep, it must endure—
So deep, thou scarce canst call it sadness;
A summer night, whose shadows fall
Gently—but o'er the wrecks of all.
Yet, through the gloom, she seem'd to feel
His presence like a happier air,
Close by his side she lov'd to steal,
As if no ill could harm her there!

And when her looks his own would seek,
Some memory seem'd to wake the sigh,
Strive for kind words she could not speak,
And bless him in the tearful eye.
O sweet the jasmine's buds of snow,
In mornings soft with May,
And sweet in summer's silent glow,
The brooklet's merry play;
But sweeter in that lonely place,
To God it must have been,
The soul that lit the Hermit's face,
Soul watching Soul within!

WHERE IS THE BRITON'S HOME?

THE SONG OF THE EMIGRANTS.

(Intended for Music.)

"Wo ist des Sängers Vaterland?"—KÖRNER.

I.

WHERE is the Briton's home?
Where the free step can roam,
Where the free sun can glow,
Where the free air can blow,

Where a free ship can bear
Hope and Strength ;—everywhere
Wave upon wave can roll,—
East and West—Pole to Pole—
Where a free step can roam,—
THERE is the Briton's Home!

II.

Where is the Briton's Home?
Where the brave heart can come,
Where Labour wins a soil,
Where a stout hand can toil;
Where, in the desert blown,
Any far seed is sown;
Where Gold or Fame is won,
Where never sets the sun;
Where a brave heart can come,—
THERE is the Briton's Home!

III.

Where is the Briton's Home?
Where the Mind's Light can come;
Where our God's holy word
Breaks on the savage herd;
Where a new flock is won
To the bright Shepherd-One;

Where the church-bell can toll,
Where soul can comfort soul,
Where Holy FAITH can come,—
THERE is the Briton's Home!

IV.

Where is the Briton's Home?
Where Man's great Law can come,
Where the great Truth can speak,
Where the Slave's chain can break,
Where the White's scourge can cease,
Where the Black dwells in peace,
Where, from his angel-hall,
God sees us brothers all;
Where Light and Freedom come,—
THERE is the Briton's Home!

THE EVERLASTING GRAVE-DIGGER.

I STOOD in one vast burial-place,
And saw his trade the sexton ply;
No life was in that bloodless face—
No light was in that freezing eye.

"Whose grave, old Sexton, digg'st thou here?"
As, up to day, the labourer cast
The relics hid for many a year;—
"Fool!—*from* the grave I dig the Past."

A skull lay ghastly at my feet,
And by the skull a diadem;
Pale shreds of Beauty's winding-sheet,
And Beauty's bones outwhitening them!

"And of the Past, are these alone
The relics that thou canst disclose?
Bring back the Monarch to his throne,
And give to Beauty's cheek the rose!"

"Stand from my path!" the Sexton said,
"Thou ask'st what MEMORY cannot give—
I only can disturb the dead,
And FAITH alone can bid them live!"

THE FAIRY BRIDE.

A TALE.*

PART I.

"And how canst thou in tourneys shine,
Or tread the glittering festal floor?
On chains of gold and cloth of pile,
The looks of high-born Beauty smile;
Nor peerless deeds, nor stainless line,
Can lift to Fame the Poor!"

His Mother spoke; and Elvar sigh'd—
The sigh alone confess'd the truth;
He curb'd the thoughts that gall'd the breast—
High thoughts ill suit the russet vest;
Yet Arthur's Court, in all its pride,
Ne'er saw so fair a youth.

* The subject of this tale is suggested by one of the Fabliaux.

Far, to the forest's stillest shade,
Sir Elvar took his lonely way;
Beneath an oak, whose gentle frown
Dimm'd noon's bright eyes, he laid him down;
A sparkling Fount amidst the glade,
At everlasting play.

"As sunlight to the forest tree"—
'Twas thus his murmur'd musings ran—
"And as amidst the sunlight's glow,
The freshness of the fountain's flow—
So—(ah, they never mine may be!)—
Are Gold and Love to Man."

And while he spoke, a gentle air
Seem'd stirring through the crystal tides;
A gleam, at first both dim and bright,
Trembled to shape, in limbs of light,
Gilded to sunbeams by the hair
That glances where IT glides;*

* "With hair that gilds the water as it glides."
MARLOWE, EDW. II.

Till, clear and clearer, upward borne,
The Fairy of the Fountain rose:
The halo quivering round her, grew
More steadfast, as the shape shone through—
O sure, a second, softer Morn
The Elder Daylight knows!

Born from the blue of those deep eyes,
Such love its happy self betray'd
As only haunts that tender race,
With flower or fount, their dwelling place—
The darling of the earth and skies
She rose—that Fairy Maid!

" Elvar!" she said, and every breeze
Grew lull'd beneath that silver voice—
" A love more true than minstrel sings,
A wealth that mocks the pomp of kings,
A Fairy gives where'er she sees
Her heart's enchanted choice.

" Then say, for I have loved thee long,
If human charms thy soul allure?—
For he no Fairy's hand may gain,

Whom earthlier love could e'er profane.
The Children of the Star and Song,
We may but bless the Pure!"

" Dream—lovelier far than e'er, I ween,
Entranced the glorious Merlin's eyes—
Through childhood, to this happiest hour,
All free from human Beauty's power,
My heart unresting, still hath been
A prophet in its sighs.

" Though never living shape hath brought,
Sweet love, that second life, to me,
Yet over earth, and through the heaven,
The thoughts that pined for love were driven.
I see thee—and I feel I sought
Through Earth and Heaven for thee!"

PART II.

Ask not the Bard to lift the veil
That hides the Fairy's bridal bower;
If thou art young, go seek the glade,

And win thyself some fairy maid;
And rosy lips shall tell the tale
In some enchanted hour.

" Farewell!" as by the greenwood tree,
The Fairy clasped the Mortal's hand—
" Our laws forbid thee to delay—
Not ours the life of every day!—
And Man, alas! may rarely be
The Guest of Fairy-land.

" Back to thy Prince's halls depart,
The stateliest of his stately train:
Henceforth thy wish shall be thy mine—
Each toy that gold can purchase, thine—
A Fairy's coffers are the heart
A mortal cannot drain."

" Talk not of wealth—that dream is o'er!—
These sunny locks be all my gold!"
" Nay! if in courts thy thoughts can stray
Along the fairy-forest way,
Wish but to see thy bride once more—
Thy bride thou shalt behold.

" Yet hear the law on which must rest
Thy union with thine elfin bride;
If ever by a word—a tone—
Thou mak'st our tender secret known,
The spell will vanish from thy breast—
The Fairy from thy side.

" *If thou but boast to mortal ear,*
The meanest charm thou findst in me,
If"—here his lips the sweet lips seal,
Low-murmuring, " Love can ne'er reveal—
It cannot breathe to mortal ear,
The charms it finds in thee!"

PART III.

High joust, by Carduel's ancient town,
The Kingly Arthur holds to day;
Around their Queen, in glittering row,
The Starry Hosts of Beauty glow.
Smile down, ye stars, on his renown
Who bears the wreath away!

There, they who gird the Table Round—
The war-gems of that wondrous ring!—
Well proven *he* in fields of fight,
To meet unscathed the meanest knight
Who sees, above the glorious ground,
His Lady and his King.

What prince as from some throne afar,
Shines through the dense unclosing throng?
Broidered with pearls, his mantle's fold
Flow'd o'er the mail embossed with gold;
As rides, from cloud to cloud, a star,
The Bright One rode along!

Twice fifty stalwart Squires, in air
The stranger's knightly pennon bore;
Twice fifty Pages, pacing slow,
Scatter his largess as they go;
Calm through the crowd he passed, and, there,
Reined in the Lists before.

Light question in those elder days
The heralds made of birth and name.
Enough to wear the spurs of gold,

To share the pastime of the bold.
" Forwards!" their wands the Heralds raise,
And in the Lists he came.

Now rouse thee—rouse thee, bold Gawaine!
Think of thy Lady's eyes above;
Now rouse thee for thy Queen's sweet sake,
Thou peerless Launcelot of the Lake!
Vain Gawaine's might, and Launcelot's, vain!—
They know no Fairy's love.

Before him swells the joyous tromp,
He comes—the victor's wreath is won!
Low to his Queen Sir Elvar kneels,
The helm no more his face conceals;
And one pale form amidst the pomp,
Sobs forth—" My gallant son!"

PART IV.

Sir Elvar is the fairest knight
That ever lured a lady's glance;
Sir Elvar is the wealthiest lord

That sits at good King Arthur's board;
The bravest in the joust or fight,
The lightest in the dance.

And never love, methinks, so blest
As his, this weary world has known;
For, every night before his eyes,
The charms that ne'er can fade arise—
A Star unseen by all the rest—
A Life for him alone.

And yet Sir Elvar is not blest—
He walks apart with brows of gloom—
" The meanest knight in Arthur's hall
His ladye-love may tell to all;
He shews the flow'r that glads his breast—
His pride to boast its bloom!

" And I who clasp the fairest form
That e'er to man's embrace was given,
Must hide the gift as if in shame!
What boots a prize we dare not name?
The sun must shine if it would warm—
A cloud is all my heaven!"

Much stately Gwynver* marvelled, how
A knight so fair should seem so cold;
What if a love for hope too high,
Has chained the lip and awed the eye?
A second joust—and surely now
The secret shall be told.

For, *there*, alone shall ride the brave
Whose glory dwells in Beauty's fame;
Each, for his lady's honour, arms—
His lance the test of rival charms.
Woe him whom Beauty never gave
The right to gild her name!

Sir Launcelot burns to win the prize—
First in the Lists his shield is seen;
A sunflower for device he took—
"*Where'er thou shinest turns my look.*"
So, as he paced the Lists, his eyes
Still sought the Sun—his Queen!

* Or Guenever; Arthur's somewhat light, if beautiful, queen. Her amours with the gentle Launcelot are well known.

"And why, Sir Elvar, loiterest thou?—
Lives there no fair thy lance to claim?"
No answer Elvar made the King;
Sullen he stood without the ring.
"Forwards!" An armed whirlwind now
On horse and horseman came!

And down goes princely Caradoc—
Down Tristan and stout Agrafrayn,—
Unscath'd, unstirr'd, through that wild field,
Lo! Launcelot bears his victor-shield;
The sunflower brightning through the shock,
And through that iron rain.

"Sound trumpets — sound! — to South and North!
I, Launcelot of the Lake, proclaim,
That never sun and never air,
Or shone or breathed on form so fair
As hers—thrice, trumpets, sound it forth!—
Our Arthur's royal dame!"

And South and North, and West and East,
Upon the thunder-blast it flies!
Still on his steed sits Launcelot,

And even echo answers not;
Till, as the stormy challenge ceas'd,
A voice was heard—" He lies!"

All turn'd their mute, astonish'd gaze,
To where the daring answer came,
And lo! Sir Elvar's haughty crest!—
Fierce on the knight the gazers prest;—
Their wands the sacred Heralds raise,—
And Gwynver weeps for shame.

" Sir Knight," King Arthur smiling said,
(In smiles a king should wrath disguise,)
" Know'st thou, in truth, a dame so fair,
Our Queen may not with her compare?
Ay, Gwynver, weep, and hide thy head—
Sir Launcelot, yield the prize."

" I know a Fair, whose charms, to none
Beneath the Heaven's wide vault can yield!
Yet is it true, that Love, most fair
Deems *that* it loves—how mean soe'er!"
" Well said,—proclaim thy paragon,
And forward to the field!

"If fair she be, thy Lady's right
Shall in her champion's feats be seen.
Her name?"—Sir Elvar's visage fell:
"A vow forbids the name to tell."
"By Heaven! thou most disloyal Knight,
Thy lips insult thy Queen!

"Foul shame, were Gwynver's name disgraced
By some light leman's taunting smile!
Whoe'er—so run the tourney's laws—
Would break a lance in Beauty's cause,
Must name the Highborn and the Chaste—
The nameless are the vile."

Sir Elvar glanced, where, stern and high,
The scornful champion rein'd his steed;
Where, o'er the Lists the seats were raised,
And jealous dames disdainful gazed,
He glanced, nor caught one gentle eye—
Courts grow not friends at need:

"King! I have said, and keep my vow."
"Then hear thy sentence. On this ground,
Ere the third sun shall sink,—or bring

A fair outshining yonder ring,—
Or know my oath, as thine is now—
No flatterer shall be found!

"Thy sword, unmeet to serve the right,—
Thy spurs, unfit for churls to wear,
Torn from thee;—through the lists (aloud,
As thou but now amidst the crowd,)
Shall hiss the hoot,—'Behold the knight,
Whose lips belie the fair!'

"Three days I give; nor think to fly
Thy doom; for on the rider's steed,
Though to the farthest earth he ride,—
Disgrace once mounted, clings beside;
And Mockery, with unsleeping eye,
Still dogs the idle speed."

Far to the forest's stillest shade,
Sir Elvar took his lonely way;
Beneath the oak, whose gentle frown
Still dimm'd the noon, he laid him down,
And saw the Fount amidst the glade,
At everlasting play.

Alas, in vain his heart addrest,
With sighs, with prayers, his elfin bride;—
What though the vow conceal'd the name,
Did not the boast the charms proclaim?
The spell has vanish'd from his breast,
The fairy from his side.

Oh, not for vulgar homage made,
The holier beauty formed for one;
It asks no wreath the arm can win;
Its lists—its world—the heart within;
All love most sacred haunts the shade—
The star shrinks from the sun!

Three days the wand'rer roved in vain;
Uprose the fatal dawn at last!
The lists are set, the galleries raised,
And, scorned by all the eyes that gazed,
Alone he fronts the crowd again,
And hears the sentence past.

Now, as, amidst the hooting scorn,
Rude hands the hard command fulfil,
While rings the challenge—"Sun and air

Ne'er shone, ne'er breathed, on form so fair
As Arthur's Queen,"—a single horn
Came from the forest hill.

A note so distant and so lone,
And yet so sweet,—it thrilled along,
It hush'd the Champion on his steed,
Startled the rude hands from their deed,
Charm'd the stern Arthur on his throne,
And still'd the shouting throng.

To North, to South, to East, and West,
They turned their eyes; and o'er the plain,
On palfrey white, a Ladye rode;
As woven light her mantle glowed.
Two lovely shapes, in azure drest,
To lead the jewell'd rein.

The crowd gave way as on they bore,
That vision from the Land of Dreams;
Veil'd was the gentle rider's face,
But not the two her path that grace.
How dim beside the charms they wore
All human beauty seems!

So to the throne the pageant came,
And thus the Fairy to the King:
" Ill suits a prince, for ever dear,
By minstrel's song, to knighthood's ear,
The wrath that wrongs the noble vow,
Which hallows ev'n a name.

" Bloom there no flowers more sweet by night?
Come, Queen, before the judgment throne;
Behold Sir Elvar's nameless bride!
Now, Queen, his doom thyself decide."
She raised her veil,—and all her Light
Of Beauty round them shone!

The bloom, the eyes, the locks, the smile,
That never earth nor time could dim;—
Day grew more bright, and air more clear,
As Heaven itself were brought more near.—
And oh! *his* joy, who felt, the while,
That light but glowed for him!

" My steed, my lance, vain Champion, now
To arms: and Heaven defend the right!"—
Here spake the Queen, " The strife is past,"

And in the lists her glove she cast,
" And I myself will crown thy brow,
Thou love-defended Knight!"

He comes to claim the garland crown;
The changeful thousands shout his name;
And faithless beauty round him smil'd,
How cold, beside the Forest's Child,
Who asked not love to bring renown,
And clung to love in shame!

He bears the prize to those dear feet;
" Not mine the guerdon! oh, not mine!"
Sadly the fated Fairy hears,
And smiles thro' unreproachful tears;
" Nay, keep the flowers, and be they sweet
When I—no more am thine!"

She lower'd the veil, she turn'd the rein,
And ere his lips replied, was gone.
As on she went her charmed way,
No mortal dared the steps to stay;
And when she vanish'd from the plain
All space seemed left alone!

Oh, woe! that fairy shape no more
Shall bless thy love or charm thy pride!
He seeks the wood, he gains the spot—
The Tree is there, the Fountain not;—
Dried up:—its mirthful play is o'er.
Ah, where the Fairy-bride?

Alas, with fairies as with men,
Who love are victims from the birth!
A fearful doom the fairy shrouds,
If once unveil'd by day to crowds.
The Fountain vanished from the glen,
The Fairy from the earth!

THE SABBATH.

Fresh glides the brook and blows the gale,
Yet yonder halts the quiet mill;
The whirring wheel, the rushing sail,
How motionless and still!

Six days stern Labour shuts the poor
From Nature's careless banquet-hall;
The seventh, an Angel opes the door,
And, smiling, welcomes all!

A Father's tender mercy gave
This holy respite to the breast,
To breathe the gale, to watch the wave,
And know—the wheel may rest!

Six days of toil, poor child of Cain,
Thy strength thy master's slave must be;
The seventh, the limbs escape the chain—
A God hath made thee free!

The fields that yester-morning knew
Thy footsteps as their serf, survey;
On thee, as them, descends the dew,
The baptism of the day.

Fresh glides the brook and blows the gale,
But yonder halts the quiet mill;
The whirring wheel, the rushing sail,
How motionless and still!

So rest,—O weary heart!—but, lo,
The church-spire, glist'ning up to heaven,
To warn thee where thy thoughts should go
The day thy God hath given!

Lone through the landscape's solemn rest,
The spire its moral points on high,—
O, Soul, at peace within the breast,
Rise, mingling with the sky!

They tell thee, in their dreaming school,
Of Power from old Dominion hurl'd,
When rich and poor, with juster rule,
Shall share the alter'd world.

Alas! since Time itself began,
That fable hath but fool'd the hour;
Each age that ripens Power in Man,
But subjects Man to Power.

Yet every day in seven, at least,
One bright Republic shall be known;—
Man's world awhile hath surely ceast,
When God proclaims his own!

Six days may Rank divide the poor,
O Dives, from thy banquet hall—
The seventh the Father opes the door,
And holds his feast for all!

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

From Heaven, what fancy stole
The dream of some good spirit, aye at hand,
The seraph whispering to the exiled soul
Tales of its native land?

Who to the cradle gave
The unseen Watcher by the Mother's side,
Born with the birth, and journeying to the grave,
The holy Angel-guide?

Is it a Fable?—No!
I heard Love answer from the sunlit air,
"Still where my presence lights the darkness, know
Life's Angel-guide is there!"—

Is it a Fable?—Hark!
FAITH answers, from the blue vault's farthest star,
"I am the Pilot of thy wandering bark,
Thy Guide to shores afar!"

Is it a Fable?—Sweet,
From wave, from air, from every forest-tree,
The murmur spoke—"Each thing thine eyes can greet
An Angel-guide can be!

"From myriads take thy choice,
In all that lives a guide to God is given;
Ever thou hear'st some Angel-guardian's voice
When Nature speaks of Heaven!"

THE MIND AND THE HEART.

" Ma vie est un combat."

I WAR for ever with my heart,
That pines when most I would be gay;
What matter if our dreams depart?—
Let labour chase regrets away!

Though every toil but wakes the spell
To rouse the Falsehood and the Foe,
Why let the breeze disturb the well;
No storm can reach the TRUTH below.

The Mind can reign in Mind alone.
" Alas!" the heavy Heart replies,
" What king but wearies of his throne,
If girt but by unloving eyes.

" Along the world, the oceans whelm,
The eye but tracks the parted Dove;
And sad as death is all thy realm,
Without the olive-branch of Love."

Before my gaze I see my youth,
The ghost of gentler years, arise,
With looks that yearn'd for every truth,
And wings that sought the farthest skies.

The sovereign of a land of dreams,
Before this waking world began,
How bright the radiant phantom seems
Beside the time-worn weary man!

How, then, the Heart rejoiced in all
That roused the quick aspiring Mind!
What glorious music Hope could call
From every Memory left behind!

Had some sad seraph left the heaven,
The sanguine soul to undeceive,
Such faith in this fair earth was given,
No voice had made me disbelieve;—

So large a love for all that live,
The spendthrift heart, in hope, possest,—
It was so sweet a gift to give
The trust that overflowed the breast;—

A seraph's hand in vain had raised
The lovely mask from Falsehood's brow;
Nor, charmed the less, I still had gazed
Along the disenchanted NOW.

Alas! no fiend the seer can spell
So dims the sunlight from the air
As that which, waked from Memory's cell,
Presents the ghost of what we were!

Beside that ghost of time gone by,
I stand upon the waste alone!
And if a sunbeam light the sky,
It wakes no floweret from the stone.

The icy calm that smiles on all,
But comes from pride that veils the pain;
Alas, how much we fain would call
Content—is nothing but Disdain!

THE DEAD QUEEN.

"MARY STUART perished at the age of forty-four years and two months. Her remains were taken from her weeping servants, and a green cloth, torn in haste from an old billiard table, was flung over her once beautiful form. Thus it remained, unwatched and unattended, except by a poor little lap-dog, which could not be induced to quit the body of its mistress. This faithful little animal was found dead two days afterwards, and the circumstance made such an impression, even on the hard-hearted minister of Elizabeth, that it was mentioned in the official dispatches."—*Mrs. Jameson's Female Sovereigns—Mary, Queen of Scots.*

NEGLECTED in that ancient hall, what once had
been a monarch lay,
And all this peopled world could spare not one
to watch beside the clay.
The loveliest shape that ever yet upon the world
had shone—
A sunbeam strayed from fairy climes, to fade
upon a throne;
The fatal face, on which to look was to adore
and die,
The Siren's voice that stirr'd a storm with each
melodious sigh.

How many victims, while in life, that charmèd
smile had made;
Or in the field, or by the block, to bless what had
betrayed!
And now that headless, mangled corpse—that
dark and dreary sleep—
And, sad in death as once in life, no mourner
stays to weep.
Stern Knox, methinks those hueless lips a harsher
truth can teach
To royal pomps, than ever thine to royal sins
could preach!
So lovely and so lov'd of old, so shunn'd and
ghastly now!
O God, and what a king—but take the bauble
from the brow!
The world it seems so full of life—of life that
well might spare
One lonely heart to watch above the lonely relics
there;—
And not one human eye;—yet see, what stirs the
funeral pall?
What sound—a sound of sorrow—wails low-
moaning through the hall?

Close by the world-forsaken form, one thing a vigil keeps,
At every sound without, more near to that still'd heart it creeps;
It gazes on those glazèd eyes—it hearkens for a breath—
It does not know, poor fool, why Love should not be true to Death.
It still can fawn, as fond a slave, upon that powerless hand;
It still can hear from voiceless lips, a voice that can command.
To *that* alone, through all the earth, no matter what had been,
The pomp or fate, the guilt or doom—the Dead was still a Queen.
Yet were the Queen a village-maid, it still had loved, the same,
The *human friend* from whom its all of grief or gladness came.
With eyes that never turned aside, it watched the senseless clay—
With moan that never ceased, it breath'd its broken heart away.

And when, at length, the doors unclosed, and
human steps drew nigh,
The human pity paused, abashed, before that
faithful eye!
It seemed to gaze with such reproach on those
who could forsake,
Then turn'd to watch again, as if the steps the
sleep might wake!
They paused—they moved—they touched the
pall!—a cry, and *both* were still—
The one whom Hate had slain, the one whom
Love sufficed to kill!
Stern Doomer, Titan-Tudor, throned amidst thy
pomp, to-day,
When thy hard eyes shall scan the tale yon
hireling scribes convey;
When thou shalt read how, at the last, one thing
at least was found
Beside thy butchered rival's corpse, the headless
and discrown'd,
Shall not the shudder half foretel thine own
expiring hour,
When those who crowd the regal hall, shall fly
the falling tower;

When, haunted by the ghost of him thy madden'd
love hath slain,
Through vacant space thy looks shall seek *one
thing that loves*—in vain?
Though priest and noble round thy bed of bitter
death shall crowd,
Far more of love was found beside thy victim's
gory shroud!

THE SOULS OF BOOKS.

I.

SIT here and muse!—it is an antique room—
High-roof'd, with casements, through whose
purple pane
Unwilling Daylight stealing through the gloom,
Comes like a fearful stranger.
There THEY reign,
(In loftier pomp than waking life had known,)
The Kings of Thought!—not crown'd until the
grave.
When Agamemnon sinks into the tomb,
The beggar Homer mounts the Monarch's throne!

Ye ever-living and imperial Souls,
Who rule us from the page in which ye breathe,
All that divide us from the clod ye gave!—
Law—Order—Love—Intelligence—the sense
Of Beauty—Music and the Minstrel's wreath!—
What were our wanderings if without your goals?
As air and light, the glory ye dispense,
Becomes our being—who of us can tell
What he had been, had Cadmus never taught
To man the magic that embalms the thought—
Had Plato never spoken from his cell,
Or his high harp blind Homer never strung?—
Kinder all earth hath grown since genial Shakspeare sung!

II.

Hark! while we muse, without the walls is heard
The various murmur of the labouring crowd.
How still, within those archive-cells interr'd,
The Calm Ones reign!—and yet they rouse the loud
Passions and tumults of the circling world!
From them, how many a youthful Tully caught
The zest and ardour of the eager Bar;

From them, how many a young Ambition sought
Gay meteors glancing o'er the sands afar—
By them each restless wing has been unfurl'd,
And their ghosts urge each rival's rushing car!
They made yon Preacher zealous for the truth;
They made yon Poet wistful for the star;
Gave Age its pastime—fired the cheek of Youth—
The unseen sires of all our beings are,—

III.

And now so still! This, Cicero, is thy heart;
I hear it beating through each purple line.
This is thyself, Anacreon—yet, thou art
Wreath'd, as in Athens, with the Cnidian Vine.
I ope thy pages, Milton, and, behold,
Thy spirit meets me in the haunted ground!—
Sublime and eloquent, as while, of old,
"It flamed and sparkled in its crystal bound;"*
These *are* yourselves—your life of life! The Wise,
(Minstrel or Sage,) *out* of their books, are clay;
But *in* their books, as from their graves, they rise,

* Comus.

Angels—that, side by side, upon our way,
Walk with and warn us!
Hark! the world so loud,
And *they*, the movers of the world, so still!

What gives this beauty to the grave? the shroud
Scarce wraps the Poet, than at once there cease
Envy and Hate! "Nine cities claim him dead,
Through which the living Homer begg'd his bread!"
And what the charm that can such health distil
From withered leaves—oft poisons in their bloom?
We call some books immoral! *Do they live?*
If so, believe me, TIME hath made them pure.
In Books, the veriest wicked rest in peace—
God wills that nothing evil should endure;
The grosser parts fly off and leave the whole,
As the dust leaves the disembodied soul!
Come from thy niche, Lucretius! Thou didst give
Man the black creed of Nothing in the tomb!
Well, when we read thee, does the dogma taint?
No; with a listless eye we pass it o'er,
And linger only on the hues that paint
The Poet's spirit lovelier than his lore.

None learn from thee to cavil with their God;
None commune with thy genius, to depart
Without a loftier instinct of the heart.
Thou mak'st no Atheist—thou but mak'st the mind
Richer in gifts which Atheists best confute—
FANCY AND THOUGHT! 'Tis these that from the sod,
Lift us! The life which soars above the brute
Ever and mightiest, breathes from a great Poet's lute!
Lo! that grim Merriment of Hatred;*—born
Of him,—the Master-Mocker of Mankind,
Beside the grin of whose malignant spleen,
Voltaire's gay sarcasm seems a smile serene,—
Do we not place it in our children's hands,
Leading young Hope through Lemuel's fabled lands—
God's and man's libel in that foul yahoo!—
Well, and what mischief can the libel do?
O impotence of Genius to belie
Its glorious task—its mission from the sky!

* Gulliver's Travels.

Swift wrote this book to wreak a ribald scorn
On aught the Man should love or Priest should
mourn—
And lo! the book, from all its ends beguil'd,
A harmless wonder to some happy child!

IV.

All books grow homilies by time; they are
Temples, at once, and Landmarks. In them, we
Who *but* for them, upon that inch of ground
We call "THE PRESENT," from the cell could see
No daylight trembling on the dungeon bar;
Turn, as we list, the globe's great axle round,
Traverse all space, and number every star,
And feel the Near less household than the Far!
There is no Past, so long as Books shall live!
A disinterr'd Pompeii wakes again
For him who seeks yon well; lost cities give
Up their untarnish'd wonders, and the reign
Of Jove revives and Saturn:—At our will
Rise dome and tower, on Delphi's sacred hill;
Bloom Cimon's trees in Academe;*—along
Leucadia's headland, sighs the Lesbian's song;

* Plut. in Vit. Cim.

With Ægypt's Queen once more we sail the Nile,
And learn how worlds are barter'd for a smile;—
Rise up, ye walls, with gardens blooming o'er,
Ope but that page—lo, Babylon once more!

v.

Ye make the Past our heritage and home;
And is this all? No; by each prophet-sage—
No; by the herald souls that Greece and Rome
Sent forth, like hymns, to greet the Morning Star
That rose on Bethlehem—by thy golden page
Melodious Plato—by thy solemn dreams,
World-wearied Tully!—and, above ye all,
By THIS, the Everlasting Monument
Of God to mortals, on whose front the beams
Flash glory-breathing day—our lights ye are
To the dark Bourne beyond; in you are sent
The types of Truths whose life is THE TO-COME;
In you soars up the Adam from the fall;
In you the FUTURE as the PAST is given—
Ev'n in our death ye bid us hail our birth;—
Unfold these pages, and behold the Heaven,
Without one grave-stone left upon the Earth!

THE LAST CRUSADER.

LEFT to the Saviour's conquering foes,
The land that girds the Saviour's grave;
Where Godfrey's crozier-standard rose,
He saw the crescent-banner wave.

There, o'er the gently-broken vale,
The halo-light on Zion glow'd;
There Kedron, with a voice of wail,
By tombs* of saints and heroes flow'd;

There still the olives silver o'er
The dimness of the distant hill;
There still the flowers that Sharon bore,
Calm air with many an odour fill.

Slowly THE LAST CRUSADER eyed
The towers, the mount, the stream, the plain,
And thought of those whose blood had dyed
The earth with crimson streams in vain!

* The valley, Jehoshaphat, through which rolls the torrent of the Kedron, is studded with tombs.

He thought of that sublime array,
The Hosts, that over land and deep
The Hermit marshall'd on their way,
To see those towers, and halt to weep!*

Resign'd the lov'd familiar lands,
O'er burning wastes the cross to bear,
And rescue from the Paynim's hands
No empire save a sepulchre!

And vain the hope, and vain the loss,
And vain the famine and the strife;
In vain the faith that bore the Cross,
The valour prodigal of life!

And vain was Richard's lion-soul,
And guileless Godfrey's patient mind—
Like waves on shore, they reach'd the goal,
To die, and leave no trace behind!

"O God!" the last Crusader cried,
"And art thou careless of thine own?
For us thy Son in Salem died,
And Salem is the scoffer's throne!

* See Tasso, Ger. Lib. cant. iii. st. vi.

"And shall we leave, from age to age,
To godless hands the Holy Tomb?
Against thy saints the heathen rage—
Launch forth thy lightnings, and consume!"

Swift, as he spoke, before his sight
A Form flash'd, white-robed, from above;
All Heaven was in those looks of light,
But Heaven, whose native air is love.

"Alas!" the solemn Vision said,
"*Thy* God is of the shield and spear—
To bless the Quick and raise the Dead,
The Saviour-God descended here!

"Ah! know'st thou not the very name*
Of SALEM bids thy carnage cease—
A symbol in itself to claim
God's People to a Home of PEACE!

"Ask not the Father to reward
The hearts that seek, through blood, the Son;
O Warrior! never by the sword
The Saviour's Holy Land is won!"

* The signification of the name "Salem," as written by the Hebrews, is the Abode, or People, of PEACE.

THE ILL-OMENED MARRIAGE.

A DOMESTIC STORY.

I.

WHERE Avon, winding pastoral meads along,
Steals its blue course, a baffled Dreamer came;
The self-made exile from the busy throng:—
Born to high fortunes, and a noble name,
Lord Ruthven's youth had love and pleasure known;
And o'er the quicksands, veil'd in verdure, Fame,
The mighty meteor, had deceiving shone.
But fickle joys demand the fickle mind;
Envy pursued the fame, regret the pleasure,
The earnest heart for kindred commune pin'd,
And the soul starved amidst the golden treasure.
Large was his bounty, larger still his trust
In human faith, till falsehood chill'd the zeal,
And slow experience canker'd, like a rust,
The native strength and brightness of the steel:—
Friends had betray'd, and love had left his side;
What sprung from virtues, into griefs had grown—
The world's wise jury, knaves and fools, decide
The guilt of natures nobler than their own.

A disappointed, wrong'd, and weary man,
He sought the hearth of yon long-silent hall;
Fresh in the vale below the river ran,—
Nature, like Time, steals from our hearts the gall,
And drops from brooding wings the dews, reviving all.

II.

Below those towers, in the green valley's glen,
His refuge, too, a fellow-sufferer sought;
Seared by the trials, to the herd of men
More stern than those whose ploughshare is the thought,
Long, 'mid the Merchant-Princes of the Mart,
Had Seaton seen his swelling sails depart,
The Hermes-Messengers of earth's great god,
Mammon!—(How from thy golden throne, O Trade,
Thou mov'st the world's foundations with a nod!)
But She adored at Antium,* present ever
To change the pæan to the funeral dirge,
Delights the temples of our pride to shiver,
Rides on the bark, that cleaves the subject surge,

* Fortune;—Horat. Od. xxxv. lib. 1.

O'er all that rules, *her* rule she loves to hold,
Tramples earth's pagan gods, and shakes the
throne of Gold!
Reverses came: the whirlwind of a day
Swept the bold labours of a life away;
And, like the captain of a fleet destroy'd,
Cast by a plank upon some barren strand,
Where rode a thousand galleys, gloom'd a void,
And the sun lit one solitude—the land!

True, it was said that aid, if timely lent,
Might raise the fortunes which the storm had bent,
But blasted not;—that skill and zeal might yet
Restore the credit, and redeem the debt.
The house, though shattered, still preserved its
name,
And one rich chance might win back all its fame.
But Seaton in his conscience, or his pride,
Left bolder hands the desperate helm to guide:
" Not I," he said, " to risks foreseen will lure
One other doom; mine own I can endure;"
And so he passed from that tumultuous stage
To face the spectres—Poverty and Age.
Yet not alone:—Of all the ruined " power,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious" Gold,

Villa, and palace; in his desolate hour
One eye look'd comfort, one sweet voice consol'd.
With Hunger at his board, the Pauper smil'd,
And bless'd the tender Fate that spared his child.

III.

Fair was thy face, young Constance; yet more fair,
In fallen fortunes, to the father's eyes!
One flower looks lovelier in the wintry air
Than all the garden in the summer skies.

Cradled in luxury, reared to happy youth,
By all that wakes the pride or lulls the pain,
With every grace that half redeems to truth
The siren music of the flatterer's strain,
Fresh from the world she came, the gloom to share,
And lull to patience the vex'd soul of care:
For there are hues to gentler natures given,
Which shine not forth till trouble cloud the heaven;
And then, the glory from the trouble won,
Bright on the Iris stream the rays that leave the sun.
Yet were there moments when she stole apart
To nurse one memory, own'd but to the heart:—

In her fair days such love—(*if* love in sooth)—
As first soft Fancy stirs in virgin Youth—
The May-day Zephyr of the happy breast,
Rippling the surface, though the deep's at rest—
Had charm'd her eye, her thought it haunted yet,
And grew more strong through silence and regret.
And he thus honoured, formed, in truth, to please
Young eyes that look not deep into the soul—
The high-born bearing, polished into ease,
The craft that veils what virtue should controul;
The modell'd form, and the melodious voice,
And every lighter grace that lures the' enamoured choice.
Poor, but ambitious, wise in all the art
That to the fortunes moulds the supple heart,
Though sprung from lineage loftier than her own,
Yet far beneath the state of Seaton's heir,
Young Harcourt woo'd, perchance in wilier tone,
Because True-Love — the Falterer — spoke not there:
But she believed, and dream'd that she was blest!
Her father liked not, yet left liking free;
Still at his board the suitor was a guest,
And hope went forth amidst the days to be.

Yet now—for Harcourt's service was the sword—
His duty called him to a distant clime,
But one short year, and they shall meet to chain
(Alas! can roses fetter?) Love to Time.
A year's delay!—'their youth may well afford
So brief a trial, and in absence gain
Fresh food for Faith.' So spake the anxious Sire:
The Lover yielded, and they parted—She
To watch, the vestal, o'er a lonely fire;
And He?—had Harcourt learned on what a reed
Leaned all the worldling in the maid adored?
Did he the pretext seize, or faintly plead
To the reluctant Sire?—the first to fly,
When the dark speck grew thickening o'er the sky?—
Did he—I say not—but vague rumours ran
Of the impending storm; a week went by,
And the mart's monarch was a ruined man!

IV.

Yet still fair Constance, in her lone retreat,
Cherish'd the woman's fond belief in truth—
They who deceive not, dream not of deceit:
Faith in the loved, is thy religion, Youth!

Though now to both might Fortune's wrath deny
The plighted vows, the Altar, and the Home,
Yet, still and far, there glittered on the eye,
Life's only fairy land—the days to come!
True, he was silent!—true, no letter brought
The absent soul, to cheer the sorrowing one;
But in those distant climes had Rumour taught
As yet the tidings of the Sire undone?
All might miscarry—seas and lands conjoin
To bar the news, and intercept the scroll;—
All easier to believe than doubt the shrine,
Which such sweet vows had hallowed to the soul. . .
But ever foremost in her wish, was yet
To veil each memory that might seem of sorrow;
That to her father, ne'er her own regret
Of the gone day might darken more the morrow.
Lull'd by her cheerful looks, he deemed, in truth,
The Childlike Fancy fled the ripening heart of Youth.

PART II.

I.

Oft to a green creek, in the margin-mead,
The fairy harbour of the winding wave,
Young Constance came:—the wild thyme and the reed,
Round the lone seat their noontide fragrance gave;
Behind, the cottage, with its woodbine walls
Half-seen, gleam'd smiling through the calm repose,
High o'er the opposing bank, the feudal halls
Of Ruthven, mournful as their master, rose.
A lonely spot; perchance, at times, the oar
A livelier wavelet to her feet would fling;
But the scared Silence settled back once more
O'er its green eyrie, with yet tenderer wing.

One day as thus she sat, and on her knees
The Book—(O Avon's Minstrel, was it thine?)
The boughs behind her stirred, as with a breeze,
But ear and eye were spell-bound by the line,
Charming all outer life to thoughts and shapes divine.

She did not hear the stir—she saw not there
The Stranger, startled from his musing mood,
Pause in the copse to marvel at the fair
Naiad or Dryad of the solitude.
Entranced he gazed—for haply most to those
Pall'd with the hackneyed idols of the crowd,
The charm that gives the glory to the rose,
Which seems its sweetness from the world to shroud.
And, oh, the candour of that brow of truth—
The virgin innocence of that soft face!
To the worn heart it seemed like its own youth
Seen in a dream—with all its careless grace,
With all the unblighted freshness of its bloom—
With all the Aurora of its opening day,
Ere yet one beam could scorch, one cloudlet gloom,
Or from one leaf a breath had breathed the dews away.

II.

Silent he stood, and when she moved, withdrew
Into the bowering copse. She closed the book,
And homeward went. Behind at distance, too,
Unmark'd, the selfsame path the Stranger took.

Something, he scarce knew what, allured him on—
Her name, her home, at least 'twere sweet to know.
Already half its gloom from earth was gone,
And that dull stream, Existence, seemed to flow
With a less weary sloth. O human heart—
How vainly thinkst thou Hope can ever die!
A moment—and to life what wings can start,
Wak'd from their sleep by some unconscious eye,
To catch the passing wind, and glitter to the sky.

III.

She gains the cot—to vanish from his view,—
When, as he winds the path the threshold near,
Loud voices!—hark! a woman's shriek within,
And all is silent; still he halts to hear.
The half-closed door intrusion seems to woo;
His steps the threshold pass—a chamber win—
And, grouping there, the noble Stranger saw
The hunted Poverty at bay with Law.
Pale, on that grey-haired man, the Daughter hung—
Sullen the hard ones stood reluctant round,
Waiting until the arms that vainly clung,

Should loose their hold. His voice the Stranger found—
"And what this old man's crime?" "He cannot pay
What he hath bought!" the Tool of Law replied;
" This is our warrant"—
From his child away
The old man broke, and moving to the door,
Murmured—" Thank Heaven, that in my hour of pride,
My wealth was ever gentle with the poor!
Sirs, I am ready!—Nay, my child!—Lead on!"
But while he spoke, in fragments on the floor,
Rent by the Stranger's hand, the parchment lay:
" Men, take your gold!—your task is done! Begone!"

Those whom we succour, how the aid endears!—
And, oh, how danger-fraught are Beauty's grateful tears!

IV.

So, from that hour to that love-lighted home,
Oft from his cheerless halls did Ruthven come;
Well did he soothe the griefs his host had known,
But well—too proud for pity—veil'd his own.

Silent, he watch'd the gentle daughter's soul,
Scann'd every charm, and peerless found the whole;
He spoke not love, and if his looks betray'd,
The anxious Sire was wiser than the Maid.
Still, ever list'ning, on her lips he hung,
Hush'd when she spoke—enraptured when she sung!
And when the hues her favourite art bestow'd,
Like a new hope from the fair fancy glow'd,
As the cold canvass with the image warms,
As from the blank, start forth the breathing forms,
So would he look within him, and compare
With those mute shapes, the new-born phantoms there;
Upon the mind, as on the canvass rose,
The young fresh world, the ideal only knows—
Landscapes more fair than those beneath the sun,
And *both* from one sweet source their life of glory won.
What music charm'd the verse on which she gazed!
How doubly dear the poet that she praised!
And when he spoke, and, from the affluent mind
That books had stored and intercourse refin'd,

Pour'd forth the treasures, — still his choice
addrest
To her mild heart what seem'd to please it best;
Yet still the Maiden dream'd not that *he* loved
Who flattered never, and at times reproved—
Reproved—but oh, so tenderly!—and ne'er
But for such faults as soils the purest bear—
A trust too liberal in our common race,
Which scarce divides the noble from the base,
A sight too dazzled by the outward hues,
A sense, though clear, too timid to refuse;
Yielding the course that it would fain pursue,
Still to each guide that proffered it the clue;
And that soft shrinking into self—allied,
If half to Diffidence—yet half to Pride.—
He loved her, and she loved him not;—revered
His lofty nature, and, revering, fear'd.
A certain sadness, shadowing thought and care,
To her seem'd sternness, in his noble air;
The glorious gifts—the kingly mind she saw,
As things that lured not tenderness, but awe!
And the dark beauty of his musing eye,
Chill'd back the heart, from which it woo'd
reply.

Harcourt!—the gay—the prodigal of youth,
Still charmed her fancy, while he chained her truth!

V.

Seaton, meanwhile, the love of Ruthven read;
With hopes made sanguine by a father's pride
The Past its griefs, the Future lost its dread—
Could he but live to see his child the bride
Of one so wise, so kind—lover, at once, and guide.
Silent at first—at last the deeps o'erflow'd;
And, as the sire and daughter sate alone
One summer eve, without their calm abode,
The sunset shining on the time-worn stone
Grey, through green woods, of Ruthven's stately towers,—
He thought how in his fortune's palmiest hours
His choice had, midst the loftiest of the land,
Found none so worthy of his daughter's hand;
And now, in poverty, the grave in view,
That daughter left in this ill world alone,
To think that choice should yet be hers! He drew

Close to her side, and clasp'd her to his heart,
And murmured, " Yes, my Constance, when we
part,
When these grey hairs go down into the dust,
How sweet my treasure to that soul to trust;
And from the ruins of a life o'erthrown,
See all that life most toil'd for, still thine own!
Ah! rather bless'd the misery that effaced
Each younger memory of the unworthier one—
Grateful the shadow—since the darkness chased
The insects only fluttering in the sun."
Then the truth glares upon her eyes—the rose
Pales from her cheek—the sire pursues the theme,
And as he speaks, the wretched daughter knows
How all his heart is anchor'd in the dream.
She does not dare, the soft one, to dispel
The happy hope.—Alas! *how* dare to dim
Back to their gloom the smiles that rarely dwell
On those sad lips, unveil her soul to him,
And say, " No, Father; let thy smiles depart,
There where it clung before, still clings my faith-
ful heart!"

VI.

And while they sate, up the green sloping hill
The stately form of Ruthven slowly came!
She saw—she fled—and in her chamber, still
Her white lips, trembling, murmured Harcourt's name!
Then from that hour her cheerful mien was fled;
Her colour waned when Ruthven's step drew near,
And her frame shook. His Hope the change but fed;
Aye to its own wild visions Hope the Seer,
Deem'd Virgin Love best told by the soft Virgin fear.
But still he spoke not love, though Seaton ever
Press'd the conviction on her shrinking ear.

And now, distrust of Harcourt's faith, combin'd
With the sharp struggles of that gentle mind.
Why still no tidings?—could the seas dissever
All those kind bonds, which still the heart to heart

In absence link?—a year had pass'd, and never
One line—one word, to say, "Thou still art dear?"
Oh, in the life of love, how long one lonely year!

VII.

While thus the soul's worst doubt was link'd with grief,—
Lord Ruthven's absence brought a brief relief:
For days, for weeks, some cause, unknown to all,
Had won the lonely master from his hall.
Much Seaton marvell'd! half disposed to blame;
"Gone, and no word ev'n absence to proclaim!"—
When, sudden as he went, the truant came;
Franker his brow, and brighter was his look,
And with a warmer clasp his host's wan hand he took:—
"Joy to thee, friend; thy race is not yet run,
Thy fortunes yet thy genius shall restore,
Thy debts are cancell'd—nay, thy house, undone,
Springs from its ashes, and thy name once more,
Clear from all stain, revives—revives to stand
'Mid England's boasts—the pillars of the land!

Joy, Seaton, joy!"

"O mock me not!—explain!—
Constance, I dream! My name—thy father's name!
What could rebuild the shatter'd wrecks again?
On earth I know Misfortune hath no claim.
Doth Heaven, as once, to earth its angels send?"
"Man, I am rich, and thou hast called me FRIEND!"

VIII.

He paused, and glanced on Constance, and his heart
Heaved with the passionate tides restrained no more;
Speechless she stood; then, waking with a start,
Fell at his knees, and wept. And from the floor
He raised, and spoke—"No, no, not *thine* to kneel!
What earth's whole treasures to thy priceless love?
I would not woo thee, Constance, nor reveal
One hope, while thine my fortunes seemed above,
Now we are equals in the gifts of earth—

Now thou canst look around, and see the young,
The fair, the noble, at thy feet again;
And *now* I kneel to thee, and own the dearth
Of all earth's gifts if thou art woo'd in vain.
Belov'd one—speak! Not mine the silver tongue,
Nor the gay mien, that soul through sense can chain;
But in this voice my heart speaks man's true love,
And on these lips there never smiled deceit;
And in thy faith all that survive above
The work-day world, as in Elysium, meet;—
Hope, joy, ambition—thou! oh, thou, their last retreat!
Wilt thou be mine?"
She could not speak for tears.
How, in that hour, the generous hand that blest
The sire, could she reject? That sire she hears
Murmur, "May *she* repay thee!" Can she feel
No softness melt the memory from her breast?
"If I could make thee happy,"—thus she said,
And ceased;—her sentence in his eyes she read;—
Eyes that all joy, how rashly form'd! reveal;
And on that passive hand his lips have press'd the seal.

PART III.

I.

And now the Past must be a blank to thee
Beautiful Constance! never more return
To the deserted hearths of Memory—
Wake not the embers from their funeral urn!—
Thy hand is plighted to another! O'er
The starry Future fix thine onward gaze!
He, thy affianced, well may merit more
Than thankless Hymen to man's hope repays.
And well and nobly, but with woman's weakness,
She strove the ancient idol to replace;
And if she grieved, the grief so seemed the meekness,
That evèn love the shadow could not trace:
But when alone! oh, *then* to muse—to start,
To hear the conscience task the bleeding heart!
Ah, what a world were this, if all were known,
And smiles in crowds were traced to tears alone!

Oft, when she heard the soul of her Betroth'd
Whisper its happy trust in her true love,
How the deceit appall'd her; how she loath'd
The lying mask, the bitter truth above!

And oft she yearn'd to speak, and to confess,
And, had he seemed less lofty to her eye,
All had been told; but she could not repress
The awe that chilled her when his step drew nigh;
His virtues still his foes, and to her fear,
His gentlest smiles had something of severe.

II.

Pass by some weeks: to London Seaton went,
His genius glorying in its wonted vent;
New props are built, and new foundations laid,
And once more rose thy crowded temple, Trade!
Then back the sire and daughter bent their way;
There, where the troth was pledged, let Hymen claim the day!
And with them came a maiden of the years
That Constance told—the friend of days gone by;
Together had they known the pangless tears,
And the gay smiles of Life's fresh April sky;
Shared the same toys in childhood, shared the same
Dreams of young love, while love was still a name;

Together knelt at night and happy morn
By the same couch, in self-forgetful prayer—
Prayer but for *others;*—for the earth had borne
Flowers for themselves, unconscious of a thorn;
And not as yet, vexing the rosy air,
The storm the spirit to the port had driven,
But joy it was—not grief—link'd the light heart
to Heaven!
And Juliet knew the Past; in her alone
Sought Constance comfort in the present pain;
To her the Future as the Past was known,
With her, Thought wandered o'er the old domain,
With her, Compassion, stronger than Despair,
Pray'd for *his* bliss, whose lot she might not share;
Pray'd—though in prayer she wept—some happier maid
Might soothe the heart her falsehood had betray'd.
These made their commune, when the secret night
Beheld them in their chamber, side by side;
While he, the Affianced, in that starry light,
By the hush'd margin of the whispering tide,
Brushing the dew, with unseen steps, would steal,
And dream, as lovers dream, the love *she* did
not feel!

III.

Meanwhile, to England Harcourt's steps return'd,
And Seaton's new-born state the earliest news he learn'd—
What the emotions of this injured man?
He had a friend—and thus his letter ran:

"Back to this land, where Merit starves, obscure,
Where Wisdom says—'Be anything but poor,'
Return'd,—my eyes the path to wealth explore,
And straight I hear—'Constance is rich once more!'
Thou know'st, my friend, with what a dexterous craft
I 'scap'd the cup a tenderer Dupe had quafft;
For in the chalice Misery holds to life,
What drop more nauseous—than a dowerless wife?
Yet she was fair, and gentle, charming—all
That Man would make his partner—at a ball!
And, for the partner of a life, what more?—
Plate at the board, a porter at the door!
Love does not thrive on mutton, when 'tis cold—
The Zone of Venus, trust me, was of gold.

Yes, she was rich, and oh, I loved her well;—
The wealth grew doubtful—fainter grew the spell;
The wealth was lost—Love vanish'd with the ore;
Plutus returns—lo, Cupid as before!
'But how,' thou ask'st, 'will one, how soft soe'er,
List to the Lover, voiceless for a year?
And how explain—how'—Why impute to thee
Questions whose folly thy quick glance can see;
Who loves is ever glad to be deceived—
Who lies the most is still the most believed.
Somewhat I trust to Eloquence and Art,
And where these fail—thank Heaven, she has a heart!
More it disturbs me that some rumours run,
That Constance, too, can play the Faithless One;
That, where round pastoral meads blue streamlets purl,
Chloe has found a Thyrsis—in an Earl!
And oh, that Ruthven! Hate is not for me;
Who loves not, hates not—both bad policy!
Yet *could* I hate, through all the earth I know
But that one man my soul could honour so.

Thro' ties remote—by some Scotch grandam's
side—
We are, if scarce related, yet allied;
And had his Mother been a barren dame,
Harcourt's had been his heritage and name;
Nay, if he die without an heir, ev'n yet—
Oh, while I write, perchance the seal is set!
Farewell!—a letter speeds to her retreat
The prayer that wafts her Harcourt to her feet,
There to explain the past—his faith defend,
And claim, et cetera—Yours, in haste, my friend!
P.S.—Thou lik'st Térèse—she's somewhat in my
way—
Wilt thou accept her? She look'd well to-day."

IV.

To Constance came a far less honest scroll,
Yet oh, each word *seem'd* vivid from the soul!
Fear, hope—reports that maddened, yet could
stir
No faith in one who ne'er could doubt of her;
Wild vows renewed—complaints of no replies
To lines unwrit—the Eloquence of Lies!

And more than all, the assurance, still too dear,
Of Love surviving that vast age—a year!
Such were the tidings to the Maiden borne,
And—woe the day—upon her BRIDAL MORN!

V.

It was the loving twilight's rosiest hour,
The Love-star trembled on the ivied tower,
As through the frowning archway pass'd the bride,
With Juliet, whispering courage, by her side;
For Ruthven went before, that first of all
His voice might welcome to his fathers' hall.
There, on the antique walls, the lamp from high
Shewed the stern wrecks of battle-storms gone by;
Gleam'd the blue mail, indented with the glaive,
Droop'd the dull banner, breezeless, on the stave;
Below the Gothic masks, grotesque and grim,
Carved from the stonework, like a wizard's whim,
Hung the accoutrements that lent a grace
To the old warrior-pastime of the chace;
Cross-bows, by hands, long dust, once deftly borne;
The Hawker's glove, the Huntsman's soundless horn;

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On the huge hearth the hospitable flame
Lit the dark portrait in its mouldering frame;
There many a Knight, in many a field renown'd,
On their new daughter from their silence frown'd;
To the young stranger, shivering to behold,
The Home she entered seem'd the tomb of old.

VI.

"Doth it so chill thee, Constance?—dare I own
The charm that haunts what childhood's years have known;
How many dreams of fame beyond my sires
Wing'd the proud thought that now no more aspires!
Here, while I paced, at the dusk twilight time,
As the deep church-bell toll'd the curfew chime,
In the dim Past my spirit seemed to live,
To every relic some weird legend give,
And muse such hopes of glorious things to be,
As they, the Dead, mused once;—wild dreams *—fulfilled in thee!*
Ah, never in those early visions shone,
A face so sweet, my Constance, as thine own!

And what if all that charm'd me then depart,
Clear, through the fading mists, smiles my soft heav'n—thy heart!
What, drooping still! Nay, love, we are not all
So sad within, as this time-darkened hall.
Come!"—and they passed (still Juliet by her side)
To a fair chamber, deck'd to greet the bride.
There, all of later luxury lent its smile
To cheer, yet still beseem, the reverend pile.
What though the stately tapestry met the eyes,
Gay were its pictures, brilliant were its dyes;
There, graceful cressets from the gilded roof,
In mirrors glass'd the landscapes of the woof.
There, in the Gothic niche, the harp was placed,
There ranged the books most hallowed by her taste;
Through the half-open casement you might view
The sweet soil prank'd with flowers of every hue;
And on the terrace, crowning the green mountain,
Gleam'd the fair statue—played the sparkling fountain—
Within, without, all plann'd, all deck'd to greet
The Queen of all—whose dowry was deceit!

Soft breathed the air, soft shone the moon above—
All, save the bride's sad heart, whispering Earth's hymn to Love!
As Ruthven's hand sought hers, on Juliet's breast
She fell; and passionate tears, till then suppress,
Gush'd from averted eyes. To him the tears
Betrayed no secret that could rouse his fears—
For joy, as grief, the tender heart will melt—
The tears but proved how well his love was felt!
And, with the delicate thought that shunn'd to hear
Thanks for the cares, which cares themselves endear,
He whispered—"Linger not!" and closed the door,
And Constance sobbed—"Thank Heaven, alone with thee once more!"

VII.

Back to his hall, Lord Ruthven's steps repair,
Proud of the pomp that love hath come to share;
With a light step the solemn floors he strode,
And his glad heart from its full deeps o'erflowed.

He, too, had thanks, than hers more meet for heaven—
Lo, to his lonely ark, the Dove was given!
Above the deluge of the Past around,
Rose the bright refuge-hill with morning crown'd;
And girdling heaven, though based upon the wild,
The rainbow arch of God's glad Promise smil'd.
He passed the porch, he gained the balmy air—
Still crouch the night-winds in their forest lair;
The moonlight silvers the unrustling pines,
On the hushed lake the trembling glory shines;
A stately shadow o'er the crystal brink,
Reflects the shy stag as it halts to drink;
And the slow cygnet, where it midway glides,
Breaks into sparkling rings the faintly heaving tides.
Wandering along his boyhood's haunts, he mused;
The hour, the heaven, the bliss his soul suffused;
It seemed all hatred from the world had flown,
And left to Nature, Love and God alone!
Ev'n holiest passion, holier rendered there,
His every thought breath'd gentle as a prayer.

VIII.

Thus as the eve grew mellowing into night,
Still from yon lattice stream'd the unwelcome light—
'Why loitering yet, and wherefore linger I?"
And at that thought ev'n Nature pall'd his eye;
He miss'd that voice, which with low music fill'd
The starry heaven of the rapt thoughts it thrill'd;
He gain'd the hall—the lofty stair he wound—
Behold, the door of his heart's fairy-ground!
The tapestry veil'd him, as its folds, half raised,
Gave to his eye the scene on which it gazed.
Still Constance wept—and hark! what sounds are those,
What awful secret those wild sobs disclose!—
"No! leave me not!—I cannot meet his eyes!
O God! must life be ever one disguise!
What seem'd indifference when we pledged the troth,
Now grown—O wretch!—to terrors that but loathe!
O that the earth might swallow me!" Again
Gush forth the sobs, which Juliet soothes in vain.

"Nay, nay, be cheered—we must not more delay;
Cease these wild bursts till I his steps can stay;
No, for thy sake—for thine—I must be gone."
She 'scap'd the circling arms, and Constance wept
alone!

IX.

By the opposing door, from that, unseen,
Where Ruthven stood, behind the arras-screen,
Pass'd Juliet. Suddenly the startled bride
Look'd up, and lo, the Wrong'd One by her side!
They gazed in silence face to face; his own
Sad, stern, and awful, chill'd her heart to stone.
At length the low and hollow accents stirr'd
His blanching lip, that writhed with every word:
"Hear me a moment, nor recoil to hear;
A love so hated wounds no more thy ear—
I thank thee—I—!" His lips would not obey
His pride,—and all the manly heart gave way.
Low at his feet she fell: the altered course
Of grief ran deepening into vain remorse.
"Forgive me!—O forgive!"
"Forgive!" he cried,
And passion rushed in speech, till then denied.

"Forgive! O woman! Through the years we live,
Each hour a torture, earth a hell!—Forgive!
Thou dost not know the ruins thou hast made.
Faith in *all* things thy falsehood has betrayed!
Thou, the last refuge, where my baffled youth
Dream'd its safe haven, murmuring—'Here is Truth!'
Thou, in whose smile I garnered up my breast,
Exult! thy fraud surpasses all the rest.
No! close, my heart—grow marble! Human worth
Is not;—and falsehood is the name for earth!"

x.

Wildly, with long, disordered strides, he paced
The floor, to feel the universe a waste;
For, as the earth, if God were not above,
Man's hearth, without the Lares—Faith and Love!
But what his woe to hers?—for him, at least,
Conscience was calm, though every hope had ceased.
But she!—all sorrow for herself had paused

To live in that worse anguish she had caused.
" No, Ruthven, no! Thy pardon not for me;
But, oh, that Heaven may shed its peace on thee.
So worthless I, so worthless thy regret;
O, that repentance could requite thee yet!
O, that a life that henceforth ne'er shall own
One thought, one wish, one hope, but to atone,—
Obedience, honour—"
" These may make the wife
A faultless statue:—love but breathes the life!
Poor child! Nay, weep not; bitterer far, in truth,
Than mine, the fate to which thou doom'st thy youth.
For manhood's pride the love at last may quell,
But when could Woman with Indifference dwell?
No sorrow soothed, no joy enhanced since shared—
O Heaven—the solitude thy soul has dared!
But thou hast chosen! Vain, for each, regret.
All that is left—to seem that we forget;
No word of mine my wrongs shall e'er recall;
Thine, wealth, and pomp, and reverence!—take them all!
May they console thee, Constance, for a heart
That—but enough! So let the loathed depart!

These chambers thine—my step invades them not;
Sleep, if thou canst, as in thy virgin cot.
Henceforth all love has lost its hated claim;
If wed, be cheer'd; our wedlock but a name.
Much as thou scorn'st me, know this heart above
The power of beauty, when disarm'd of love:
And so—may Heaven forgive thee!"

"Ruthven stay!
Generous—too noble; can no distant day
Win *thy* forgiveness also, and restore
Thy trust, thy friendship, ev'n though love be o'er?"
He paused a moment, with a softened eye,
" Alas, thou dreadest, while thou ask'st, reply.
If ever, Constance, that blest day should come,
When crowds can teach thee what the loss of Home;
If ever, when with those who court thee there,
The love that chills thee now thou canst compare,
And feel that if thy choice thou couldst recall,
Him now unlov'd, thy love would choose from all;
Why then, one word, one whisper!—oh, no more!"
And fearful of himself, he closed the door!

PART IV.

I.

Ah, yes, Philosopher,* thy creed is true!
'Tis our own eyes that give the rainbow's hue;
What we call MATTER, in this outer earth,
Takes from our senses, those warm dupes, its birth.
How fair, to sinless Adam, Eden smil'd;
But sin brought tears, and Eden was a wild!
Man's soul is as an everlasting dream,
Glassing life's fictions on a phantom stream:
To-day, in glory all the world is clad—
Wherefore, O Man?—because thy heart is glad!
To-morrow, and the selfsame scene survey—
The same! Oh! no—the pomp hath passed away!
Wherefore the change? *Within*, go ask reply—
Thy heart hath given its winter to the sky!
Vainly the world revolves upon its pole;—
Light — Darkness — Seasons — these are in the soul!

* Berkeley.

II.

"Trite truth," thou sayest—well, if trite it be,
Why seek we ever from ourselves to flee?
Pleased to deceive our sight; and loth to know
We bear the climate with us where we go!

To that immense Bethesda, whither still
Each worst disease seeks cures for every ill,—
To that great well, in which the Heart at strife,
Merges its own amidst the common life,—
Whatever name it take, or Public Zeal,
Or Self-Ambition—still as sure to heal,
From his sad hearth, his sorrows Ruthven bore;—
Long shunn'd the strife of men, now sought once more.
Flock'd to his board, the Magnates of the Hour,
Who clasp for Fame, its spectre-likeness — Power!
The busy, babbling, talking, toiling race—
The Word-besiegers of the Fortress—Place!
Waves, each on each, in sunlight hurrying on,
A moment gilded—in a moment gone;

For Honours fool but with deluding light,
The place it glides through—*not* the *wave*—is bright!*
The means, if not his ends, with these the same,
In Ruthven, Party hail'd a Leader's name!
Night after night, the listening Senate hung
On that rous'd mind, by Grief to Action stung!
Night after night, when Action, spent and worn,
Left yet more sad the soul it had upborne;
The sight of Home the frown of Life renew'd—
The World gave Fame, and Home a Solitude!

III.

And Constance!—ever from that fearful hour
In which her conscience saw her crime unveil'd,
Her nature ripened to the loftier power,
From which the fancy of her girlhood quail'd.
The abandon'd Past, a cloud-wrapt land became,
Before whose portals gleam'd a Seraph's sword,
And the high name of WIFE, though but a name,
Awed back the tempting shadows with a Word!

* Schiller.

A graver, mightier, and more solemn sense,
Of all that hallows woman's holiest tie,
Woke in the woman's soul, and call'd from thence
Armies in Thought against the Memory;
And now, in truth, she could with crowds compare
Him who had chosen one so ill-requiting;
She saw him noblest of the noble there;
All eyes commanding, and all ears delighting!

'Twas a new world to her, that crowning flower
Of all which Rank amid its best can find,
That dazzling circle—Genius, Wit, and Power,
The focus of an empire's mingled mind;
And, midst them all, what name than his more high?
What form more princely?—oh, what soul so bright?
By slow degrees in crowds he fix'd her eye,
And when he went, what star was left to Night?

IV.

Alas! 'twas never, save in crowds, they met,
They who, from crowds, should so have hail'd retreating;

But never Love, by trysting greenwood yet,
More yearn'd than they, for that so cheerless meeting;
And if the eye encountered, or a word
Of the one voice were, though at distance, heard—
Oh! could the other but have seen the cheek
Flush with emotions Pride forbade to speak,
Or heard, amidst the formal sounds of greeting,
The pulse, ev'n for such sounds, with joy, yet sadness, beating!
But woe, when once the confidence of hearts
Pledged at the shrine, is rent in storm away—
When lip to lip no more the soul imparts,
And love, if felt, shrinks timorous from the day!
Man's pride in him—and fear and shame in her,
The modest instinct, the abash'd remorse,
Still kept them silent; and the deeps that stir
To the one sea, through darkness take their course.
"His love is lost for ever," still she sigh'd,
When his calm brow the strife beneath belied;
And, with the fever of that wretched mirth
Which never takes from happiness its birth,

She seem'd the gayest of the group to shine—
"Heartless!" he murmured, "Why should I repine?"

V.

The world look'd on, and construed, as it still
Interprets all it knows not—into ill.
The church's ground by daylight we revere—
Let darkness come—what phantoms in our fear!
So in the holiest shade will Slander mark
Ghosts in each tomb—all Hades in the dark!
"Was ever lord, so newly wed, so cold?—
Poor thing!—forsaken ere a year be told!
Doubtless, some wanton—true, we know not who—
But those proud sinners are so wary too!
Oh! for the good old days—we never heard
Of men so shocking under George the Third!"
So ran the gossip. With the gossip, came
The brood it hatch'd—consolers to the dame.
The soft and wily wooers, who begin
Through sliding pity, the smooth ways to sin.
My lord is absent at the great debate,
Go, soothe the lady's unprotected state—

Go, Lechery—go, and wish the cruel Heaven
To thee such virtue, now so wrong'd, had given!
Yes, round her flock'd the young world's fairest ones,
The soft Rose-Garden's incense-breathing sons:—
Roused from his calm, Lord Ruthven's watchful eye
Mark'd the new clouds that darken'd round his sky,
And raptur'd saw—though for his earth too far—
How fleets and fades each cloud before that stainless Star.

VI.

Now came the graver trial, though unseen
By him who knew not where the grief had been—
He knew not that an earlier love had steel'd
Her heart to his—*that* curse, at least, concealed;
Enough of sorrow in his lonely lot,
The why—what matter?—that she loved him not!

One night, when Revel was in Ruthven's hall,
He neared the brilliant cynosure of all:
"Deign" (thus he whisper'd) "to receive with grace
Him who may hold the honours of my race:—

When the last Ruthven dies, behold his heir!"
He said. She turn'd—O Heaven!—and Harcourt there!
Harcourt, the same as when her glance he charmed,
For deeper conquest, by compassion armed;
The same, save where a softer shadow, cast
O'er his bright looks, reflected the sad Past!
Now, when unguarded and in crowds alone,
The Future dark — the household gods o'erthrown;
Now, when those looks, (that seem, the while they grieve,
Ne'er to reproach)—can pity best deceive;
The sole affection she of right can claim—
Now, Virtue, tremble not—the Tempter came!

VII.

He came, resolved to triumph and revenge—
Sure of a heart whose sorrow spoke no change;
Pleased at the thought to bind again the chain—
For they who love not, still can love to reign;

Calm in the deeper and more fell design
To sever those whom outward fetters join—
To watch the discord Scandal rumours round,
Fret every sore, and fester every wound;
Could he but make Dissension firm and sure,
Success would render larger schemes secure;—
"*Let Ruthven die but childless!*" — ran his prayer,
And in the lover's sigh, cold avarice prompts the heir.

He came, and daily came, and daily schemed—
Soft, grave, and reverent, but the friend he seemed.

These distant cousins, from their earliest days,
To different goals had trod their varying ways:
If Ruthven oft with generous hand supplied
Those wants call'd luxuries—wants they are to pride—
Yet gifts are sometimes as offences viewed,
And envy is the mean man's gratitude;
And, truth to own, whate'er the one bestow'd,
More from his own large, careless nature flow'd

Than through the channels tenderer sources send,
When Favour equals—since it asks a Friend.
But Ruthven loved not, in the days gone by,
The cold, quick shrewdness of that stealthy eye,
That spendthrift recklessness, which still was not
The generous folly which itself forgot.
As snows enrich the soil they freeze, who knows
How much the flowers have cause to thank the snows?
You love the spendthrift—you the miser loathe,
Yet oft the clockwork is the same in both:
Ope but the works—the penury and excess
Chime from one point—the central selfishness:—
And though men said (for those, who wear with ease
The vulgar vices, seldom much displease,)
"His follies injure but himself alone!"
His follies spared no welfare but his own:
Mankind he deemed the epitome of self,
And never laid *that* volume on the shelf.
Somewhat of this, had Ruthven mark'd before—
Now he was less acute, or Harcourt more—
The first, absorb'd in sorrow or in thought;
The last in craft's smooth lessons deeper taught.

Not over anxious to be undeceived,
Ruthven reform in what was rot believed;
They held the same opinions in the state,
And were congenial—in the last debate;
Harcourt had wish'd to join the patriot crew,
Who botch our old laws with a patch of new;
Ruthven the wish approved, and found the seat-
And so the Cousins' union grew complete.

Well, then, at board behold the constant guest,
With love as yet by eyes alone exprest;
From the past vows he dared not yet invoke
The antient Voice—yet of the Past he spoke.
Whene'er expected least, he seemed to glide
A faithful shadow to her haunted side.
But why relate how men their victims woo?—
He left undone no art that can undo.

VIII.

And what deem'd Constance now, that, face to face,
She could the contrast of the Portraits trace?—
Could list, when Ruthven dream'd not that she gave
Heed to the themes for Beauty's ear too grave—

To that harmonious soul, where never aught
Of mean made discord in its lyre of thought?
And then from Ruthven turn to hear that voice
Which once had all Earth's music for her choice,
Murmur the small talk, minced to please the fair—
Both fed and coloured by each change of air—
Wing the light jest on Lady Mary's gown,
Hunt the last slander through the maze of Town;
Or pausing, fearful lest it seem too glad,
Whisper the sentiment it means for sad;
That sort of sentiment—that tinsel sort
Of Man makes up—half-earnest and half sport:—
The sport is in the prettiness of phrase,
The earnest in the poison it conveys;
Something at once effeminate and bold—
The actor's foil, the gallery takes for gold—
The tricks of words which soft-tongued Vices teach,
To their best skill'd Man-Milliner of Speech?
All this had duped her in the early prime,
When balls are epochs—suit they now the time?
Who shall decide? This truth, at least be told—
She grew more thoughtful, and her lord more cold.

PART V.

I.

The later Summer in that Second Spring
Which August pours from Amalthæan horn—
When the turf glistens with the Fairy ring,
And the fields ripple with the gleam of corn—
When from the oak and elm a livelier green
New shoots put forth—when o'er the brooks, that run
With fresher glee, the Moonlight's mellowest sheen
Sleeps in the midnight, glorious as a sun—
When o'er the margin of the Lake, the leaves
Of the Waves' Queen, the Water-lily, float
Tremulous, and the new-fledged goldfinch weaves
The airy meshes of his earliest note—
The later summer shone on Ruthven's towers—
To Ruthven's towers the Lord and Wife returned,
With a long train of guests to cheer the hours:—
Harcourt with these, and Seaton, (who had learned
Enough to rouse him from his dreams of trade)
To watch the misery that himself had made.

Now, never from that first and fatal night,
Did Constance counsel from one breast invite;
Mute ev'n to Juliet of that gloomy scene,
His wrongs, at least, a sacred trust had been;
And Juliet now, and had for months been gone,
To milder climates with a dying mother.
Nor grieved the Wife to weep, and guard, alone.
The solemn tale vouchsafed not to another,
And least to Seaton:—from his eyes she sought
Now, as before, to veil her every care;—
With a gay smile she warded off each thought
That strove the secret (*some* there seemed) to share;
But when the Father, trembling, saw once more
The fatal Harcourt ever by her side,
And Ruthven—oh, how altered from of yore!
The cold-eyed Lord of the neglected bride,
Then, half in wrath and half in fear, his breast
Doubtful to warn, (for warning oft but speeds
The very peril, which when once exprest
Becomes familiar, till its dread recedes,
And, from weak tears refresh'd, burst forth the poison seeds,)

To Ruthven's halls he came, resolved to know
Whose first the wrong, or wherefore sprung the woe;
And if the Husband could his trust forsake,
One hand should guard, one vigil be awake.

II.

Meantime the cheek of Constance lost its rose,
Food brought no relish, slumber no repose—
The wasted form pined hour by hour away,
But still the proud lip struggled to be gay;
And Ruthven still the proud lip could deceive,
Till the proud man forgot the proud in smiling grieve!

III.

In that old pile there was a huge square tower,
Whence looked the Warder in its days of power:
Still, in the arch below, the eye could tell
Where on the steel-clad van the grim portcullis fell;
And from the arrow-headed casements, deep
Sunk in the walls of the abandoned keep,

The gaze look'd kingly in its wide command
O'er all the features of the subject land.
From town and hamlet, copse and vale, arise
The hundred spires of Ruthven's Baronies;
And town and hamlet, copse and vale, around,
Its arms of peace the azure Avon wound.

IV.

A lonely chamber, in this rugged tower,
The lonely Lady made her favourite bower—
From her more brilliant chambers crept a stair,
That, through a waste of ruin, ended there;
And there, unseen, unwitness'd, none intrude,
Or vex the spirit from the solitude.
How, in what toil, or luxury of the mind,
Could she the solace or the lethe find?—
Music or books?—nay, rather, might be guess'd
The art her maiden leisure loved the best;
For there the easel and the hues were brought,
Though all unseen the fictions that they wrought.
Harcourt, more bold, the change in Constance made—
Sure, Love lies hidden in that depth of shade!

That cheek how hueless, and that eye how dim,—
" Wherefore," he thought, and smiled, " if not
for him?"
More now his manner and his words, disarm'd
Of their past craft, the anxious Sire alarm'd.
True, there was nought in Constance to reprove;
But still, what hypocrite like lawless love?—
More close his watch. One evening as he stood,
Pensive, within the casement's arch'd recess,
Unseen, he heard the words that chill'd his blood,
And left him little save the worst to guess.
'Tis Constance answering, in a faltering tone,
Some suit; and what,—was, by the answer, shown.
"Yes! in an hour," it said.—"Well, be it so."—
" The place!"—" Yon keep."—Thou wilt not
fail me!"—" No!"
'Tis said;—she first, then Harcourt, quits the room.
" Would," groaned the sire, " my child were in
the tomb!"
He gasp'd for breath, the fever on his brow—
Was it too late? What boots all warning now?
If saved to-day—to-morrow—and the same
Danger and hazard! Oh, when lost the shame,
Virtue has nought to guard except the name!

V.

Sickening and faint, he gained the outer air,
And on the marge of the far-gleaming lake,
The melancholy master, musing there,
He saw reclined, with an unconscious eye,
Watching the wavelets, as they breathe and break
Upon the gentle shore. Then hurriedly
The Father hastened to the idler's side,
And touch'd.—" O guardian of a soul!" he cried,
" Dreamer, or Dullard, wilt thou never wake?"
Ruthven looked up, and rose, and coldly eyed
The father's flushing cheek and heaving breast.
"Dares he complain," he thought, "or she confide?"
" Well, sir!" he said, " I listen for the rest."

VI.

Seaton was one in whom, in common hours,
The World was strong: he lived in its loud life,
A homely man of strong, keen, hardy powers,
Pleas'd in its joys, exulting in its strife:
He reverenced Gold, not for the end so much
As for the stirring means by which 'tis won;

And to the crowd, his plain, blunt bearing such
As the crowd hails in Labour's simple son.
Thus men esteem'd him of the common clay,
Whose bridled passions sober thought obey;
A worldly, cool, and calculating brain,
His heart a compass, and the needle, gain.
But now all self, all prudence swept away,
The MAN'S great nature leapt into the day:
He stretch'd his arms, and terrible and wild,
His voice went forth—"I gave thee, Man, my child!
I gave her young and innocent—a thing
Fresh from the Heaven, no stain upon its wing;
One form'd to love, and to be loved; and now,
(Few moons have faded since the solemn vow,)
How do I find thou hast discharged the trust?
Account!—nay, frown not—to *thy God* thou must!
Pale, wretched, worn, and dying:—Ruthven, still
These lips should bless thee, couldst thou only kill.
But is that all? Thou lead'st the unhonour'd bride
Into the snares:—*thou* sworn from snares to guide!

Thou leav'st a girl—a child—a lonely one,
Forsaken, scorned—*thy* victim if undone—
Thou leav'st her daily, hourly, to compare
With thine *his* love—with thy contempt, *his* care!
Oh, if the lightning blast thee, I the sire,
Tell thee thy heart of steel attracts the fire;
Hadst thou but loved her, that meek soul I know—
Know all—". His passion faltered in its flow;
He paused an instant, then before the feet
Of Ruthven fell. "Have mercy! Save her yet!
Take back thy gold: say, did I not endure,
And can again, the burthen of the poor?—
But *she*,—the light, pride, angel, of my life—
God speaks in me—O husband save thy wife!"

VII.

"Save! and from whom, old Man?" Yet as he spoke
A gleam of horror on his senses broke;
"From whom? What! knowest thou not who made the first,
Though fading, fancy, youth's warm visions nurst,

This, Harcourt — this —" he stopp'd abrupt —
appall'd!
Those words how gladly had his lips recall'd;
For at the words—the name—all life seem'd
gone
From Ruthven's image:—as a shape of stone,
Speechless and motionless he stood! At length
The storm suspended burst in all its strength:
" And this to me—at last to *me!*" he cried,
" Thine be the curse, who hast love to hate allied;
Why, when my life on that one hope I cast,
Why didst thou chain my future to her past—
Why not a breath to say, ' She loved before;'
Pause yet to question, if the love be o'er!"
Didst thou not know how well I loved her?—how
Worthy the Altar was the holy vow,
That in the wildest hour my suit had known,
Hadst thou but said, ' Her heart is not her own,'
Thou hadst left the chalice with a taste of sweet,
I—*I* had brought the Wanderer to her feet—
Had seen those eyes through grateful softness
shine,
Nor turn'd—O God!—with loathing fear from
mine;

And from the sunshine of her happy breast,
Drawn one bright memory to console the rest!—
But now, thy work is done—*till* now, methought,
There was one plank to which the shipwreck'd caught;—
Forbearance—Patience, might obtain at last
The distant Haven—see! the dream is past—
She loves another! In that sentence—hark
The crowning thunder!—the last gleam is dark;
Time's wave on wave can but the more dissever;
The world's vast space one void for ever and for ever!"

VIII.

Humbled from all his anger, and too late
Convinced whose fault had shaped the daughter's fate,
The Father heard;—and in his hands he veil'd
His face abash'd, and voice to courage fail'd;
For how excuse—and how console?—and so,
As when the tomb shuts up the ended woe,
Over that burst of anguish closed the drear
Abyss of silence—sound's chill sepulchre!
At length he dared the timorous looks to raise,
But gone the form on which he feared to gaze.

Calm, at his feet, the wave crept murmuring;
Calm sail'd the cygnet with its folded wing;
Gently above his head, the lime-tree stirr'd,
The green leaves rustling to the restless bird;
But he who in the Beautiful of Life,
Alone with him should share the heart at strife,
Had left him there to the earth's happy smile—
Ah! if the storms within earth's calmness could
beguile!

IX.

With a swift step, and with disordered mind,
Through which one purpose still its clue could
find,
Lord Ruthven sought his home. "Yes, mine,
no more"—
So mused his soul. "To hope or to deplore;
No more to watch the Heart's Aurora break
O'er that lov'd face the light to life to speak—
No more, without a weakness that degrades,
Can Fancy steal from Truth's eternal shades!
Yes, we must part! But if one holier thought
Still guards that shrine my fated footstep
sought,

Perhaps, at least, I yet her soul may save,
And leave her this one hope — a Husband's
grave!"

Home gained—he asks—they tell him—her
retreat!
He winds the stairs—and midway halts to meet
His rival passing from that mystic room,
With a chang'd face, half sarcasm and half gloom—
Writhed Ruthven's lip—his hands he clench'd—
his breast
Heaved with Man's natural wrath: the wrath the
man supprest.
" Her name, at least, I will not make the gage
Of that foul strife—whose cause a husband's
rage;"
So, with the calmness of his lion eye,
He glanced on Harcourt, and he pass'd him by.

X.

And now he gains, and pauses at the door—
Why beats so loud the heart so stern before?
He nerved his pride—one effort, and 'tis o'er.

Thus, with a quiet mien, he enters:—There
Kneels Constance—yonder—Dare she kneel in prayer?
What object doth that meek devotion chain,
In yon dark niche?—Before his steps can gain
Her side, she starts—confus'd, dismay'd, and pale,
And o'er the object draws the curtain'd veil;
But there the implements of art betray
What thus the conscience dare not give to day.—
A Portrait?—whose but his, the loved and lost,
Of a sweet Past the melancholy ghost?
So Ruthven guess'd—more dark his visage grown,
As thus he spoke:—"Once more we meet alone!
Once more—be tranquil—hear me! not to' upbraid,
And not to threat, thy presence I invade;
But if the pledge I gave thee I have kept,
If not the Husband's rights the Wife hath wept,
If thou hast shared whatever gifts be mine—
Wealth—honour—freedom—all unbought, been thine—
Hear me—O hear me, for thy father's sake!
For the full heart that thy disgrace would break!

By all thine early innocence—by all
The woman's Eden—withered with her fall—
I, whom thou hast denied the right to guide,
Implore the daughter—not command the bride—
Protect—nor only from the sin and shame—
Protect from *slander*—thine—*My Mother's*—
name!—
For *hers* thou bearest now!—and in her grave
Her name thou honourest, if thine own thou
save!
I know thou lov'st another!—Dost thou start?
From him, as me—the time hath come to part;
And ere for ever I relieve thy view,
The one thou lov'st must be an exile too.
Be silent still, and fear not lest my voice
Betray thy secret—Flight shall seem *his* choice;
A fair excuse—a mission to some clime
Where—weep'st thou still?—For *thee* there's hope
in time!—
This heart is not of iron, and the worm
That gnaws the thought, soon ravages the form;
And then, perchance, thy years may run the
course
Which flows through love undarken'd by remorse.

And now, farewell for ever!" As he spoke,
From her cold silence with a bound she broke,
And clasped his hand—"O leave me not! or know
Before thou goest, the heart that wronged thee so,
But wrongs no more."

"No more?—O spurn the lie!
Harcourt but now hath left thee! Well—deny!"
"Yes, he hath left me!"—"And he urged the suit
That—but thou maddenest me!—false lips, be mute!"
—"He urged the suit—it is for ever o'er;
Dead with the folly youth's crude fancies bore.
One word, nay less, one gesture, (and she blush'd,)
Struck dumb the suit, the scorn'd presumption crush'd."
—"What! and yon portrait curtained with such care?"—
"*There* did I point, and say—'*My heart is there!*"

XI.

Amazed, bewildered—struggling half with fear,
And half delight—his steps the curtain near.
He lifts the veil:—that face—IT IS HIS OWN!
But not the face her later gaze had known,

Not stern, nor sad, nor cold—but in those eyes,
The wooing softness love unmix'd supplies;
The fond smile beaming the glad lips above,
Bright, joyous, tender, as when first he sighed—
"I love."
An instant mute—oh, canst thou guess the rest?
The next his Constance clinging to his breast;
All, from the proud reserve, at once allied
To the Girl's modesty the Woman's pride,
Melting in sobs, and happy tears—and words
Swept into music from long-silent chords.
Then came the dear confession, full at last,
Then streamed life's Future on the fading Past;
And as a sudden footstep nears the door,
As a third shadow dims the threshold-floor—
As Seaton entering, in his black despair,
Pauses the tears, the joys, the heaven to share—
The happy Ruthven raised his princely head,
"Give her again—this day in truth we wed!"

And when the spring the earth's fresh glory weaves
In merry sunbeams and green quivering leaves,
A joy-bell ringing through a cloudless air,
Proclaims to Ruthven's hearth and halls—an heir!

THE LAY OF THE BEACON.

I.

How broad and bright athwart the wave,
Its steadfast light the Beacon gave!
Far beetling from the headland shore,
The rock behind, the surge before;
How lone and stern and tempest-seared,
Its brow to Heaven the turret reared!
Type of the glorious souls that are
The lamps our wandering barks to light
With storm and cloud round every star.
The lone ones of the night!

II.

How dreary was that solitude!
Around it screamed the sea-fowl's brood;
The only sound, amidst the strife
Of wind and wave, that spoke of life,
Except, when Heaven's ghost-stars were pale,
The distant cry from hurrying sail.
From year to year the weeds had grown
O'er walls slow-rotting with the damp;
And, with the weeds, decay'd alone,
The Warder of the lamp.

III.

But twice in every week from shore
Fuel and food the boatman bore;
And then so dreary was the scene,
So wild and grim the warder's mien,
So many a darksome legend gave
Awe to that Tadmor of the wave,
That scarce the boat the rock could gain,
Scarce heav'd the pannier on the stone,
Than from the rock and from the main,
The' unwilling life was gone.

IV.

A man he was whom man had driven
To loathe the earth and doubt the heaven;
A tyrant foe, (a friend in youth,)
Had warped the law to blast the truth;
Stripp'd hearth and home, and left to shame
The broken heart—the blacken'd name.
Dark exile from the Eden, then
He hail'd the rock, the lonely wild:
Upon the man at war with men
The frown of Nature smil'd.

V.

But suns on suns had roll'd away;
The frame was bow'd, the locks were grey;
And the eternal sea and sky
Seem'd one still death to that dead eye;
And Terror, like a spectre, rose
From the grim tomb of that repose.
No sight, no sound, of human-kind;
The hours, like drops upon the stone!
What countless phantoms man may find
In that dark word—"ALONE"!

VI.

Dreams of blue Heaven and Hope can dwell
With Thraldom in its narrowest cell;
The airy mind may pierce the bars,
Elude the chain, and hail the stars:
Canst thou no drearier dungeon guess
In *space*, when space is loneliness?
The body's freedom profits none;
The heart desires an equal scope;
All nature is a gaol to one
Who knows nor love nor hope!

VII.

One day, all summer in the sky,
A happy crew came gliding by,
With songs of mirth, and looks of glee—
A human sunbeam o'er the sea!
" O Warder of the Beacon," cried
A noble youth, the helm beside,
" This summer-day how canst thou bear
To guard thy smileless rock alone,
And through the hum of Nature hear
No heart-beat, save thine own?"

VIII.

" I cannot bear to live alone,
To hear no heart-beat, save my own;
Each moment, on this crowded earth,
The joy-bells ring some new-born birth;
Can ye not spare one form—but one,
The lowest—least beneath the sun,
To make the morning musical
With welcome from a human sound?"
" Nay," spake the youth—" and is that all?
Thy comrade shall be found."

IX.

The boat sail'd on, and o'er the Main
The Awe of Silence closed again;
But in the wassail hours of night,
When goblets go their rounds of light,
And in the dance, and by the side
Of her, yon moon shall mark his bride,
Before that Child of Pleasure rose,
The lonely rock—the lonelier one,
A haunting spectre—till he knows
The human wish is won!

X.

Low-murmuring round the turret's base
Glides wave on wave, its gentle chase;
Lone on the rock, the warder hears
The oar's faint music—hark! it nears—
It gains the rock; the rower's hand
Aids a grey, time-worn form to land.
"Behold the comrade sent to thee!"
He said—then went. And in that place
The Twain were left; and Misery
And Guilt stood face to face!

XI.

Yes, face to face *once more* arrayed,
Stood the Betrayer—the Betray'd!
Oh, how through all those gloomy years,
When Guilt revolves what Conscience fears!
Had that wrong'd victim breath'd the vow
That, if but face to face—And now,
There, face to face with him he stood,
By the great sea, on that lone steep;
Around, the voiceless Solitude,
Below—a grave—the Deep!

XII.

They gazed—the Injurer's face grew pale—
Pale writhe the lips, the murmurs fail;
And thrice he strove to speak—in vain!—
The sun looks blood-red on the main,
The boat glides, waning less and less—
No Law lives in the wilderness,
Except Revenge—man's first and last!
Those wrongs—that wretch—could they forgive?
All that could sweeten life was past,
Yet, oh, how sweet to live!

XIII.

He gazed before, he glanced behind,
There, o'er the steep rock seems to wind
The devious, scarce-seen path, a snake
In slime and sloth might, labouring, make,
With a wild cry he springs;—he crawls;
Crag upon crag he clears;—and falls
Breathless and mute; and o'er him stands,
Pale as himself, the chasing foe—
Mercy! what mean those claspèd hands,
Those lips that tremble so?

XIV.

"Thou hast curs'd my life, my wealth despoil'd;
My hearth is cold, my name is soil'd;
The wreck of what was Man, I stand
'Mid the lone sea and desert land!
Well, I forgive thee all; but be
A human voice and face to me!
O stay—O stay—and let me yet
One thing, that speaks man's language, know!—
The waste hath taught me to forget
That earth once held a foe!"

XV.

O Heaven! methinks, from thy soft skies,
Look'd tearful down the angel-eyes;
Back to those walls, to mark them go,
Hand clasp'd in hand—the Foe and Foe!
And when the sun sunk slowly there,
Low knelt the prayerless man in prayer.
He knelt, no more the lonely one;
Within, secure, a comrade sleeps;
That sun shall not go down upon
A desert in the deeps!

XVI.

He knelt—the man who half till then
Forgot his God in loathing men,—
He knelt, and pray'd that God to spare
The Foe to grow the Brother there;
And, reconciled by Love to Heaven,
Forgiving—was he not forgiven?
"Yes, man for man thou didst create;
Man's wrongs, man's blessings can atone!
To learn how Love can spring from Hate—
Go Hate, and live alone."

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD AND CONDORCET.

Led by the Graces, through a Court he moved,
"All men revered him, and all women loved"*—
Happier than Paris, when to *him* there came
The three Celestials—Learning, Love, and Fame;
He found the Art to soothe them all, and see
The Golden Apple shared amidst the Three.
Yet he, this man, for whom the world assumed
Each Rose that in Gargettian† gardens bloomed,
Left to mankind a legacy of all
That from Earth's sweetness can extract a gall.
With him, indeed, poor Love is but a name—
Virtue a mask—Beneficence a game.
The Eternal Egotist, the Human Soul,
Sees but in Self the starting-post and goal.
Nipp'd in the frost of that cold, glittering air,
High thoughts seem dwarf'd, and youth's warm
dreams despair!

* "The men respect you, and the women love you."—Such was the subtle compliment paid by Prior to one equally ambitious of either distinction; viz., Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke.

† Epicurean.

He lived in luxury, and he died in peace,
And saints in powder wept at his decease!
Man loves this sparkling satire on himself;—
Gaze round—see Rochefoucauld on every shelf!

Look on the other;—Penury made him sour,
His learned youth the hireling slave of power;
His Manhood cast amidst the stormiest time,
A hideous stage, half frenzy and all crime;—
Upon the Dungeon's floor of stone he died,
With Life's last Friend, his Horace, by his side!
Yet he—this Sage—who found the world so base,
Left what?—His "Progress of the Human Race,"
A golden dream of man without a sin;
All virtue round him, and all peace within!
Man does not love such portraits of himself,
And thrusts the unwelcome Flatterer from the shelf.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

I.

Into my heart a silent look,
Flashed from thy careless eyes,
And what before was shadow, took
The light of summer skies.

The First-born Love was in that look;
The Venus rose from out the deep
Of those inspiring eyes.

II.

My life, like some lone solemn spot,
A spirit passes o'er,
Grew instinct with a glory not
In earth or heaven before.
Sweet trouble stirr'd the haunted spot,
And shook the leaves of every thought
Thy presence wandered o'er!

III.

My being yearned, and crept to thine,
As if in times of yore
Thy soul had been a part of mine,
Which claimed it back once more.
Thy very self no longer thine,
But merged in that delicious life,
Which made us ONE of yore!

IV.

There bloomed beside thee forms as fair,
There murmured tones as sweet,

But round thee breathed the' enchanted air,
'Twas life and death to meet.
And henceforth thou alone wert fair,
And, though the stars had sung for joy,
Thy whisper only sweet!

LOVE'S SUDDEN GROWTH.

I.

But yester-morn, with many a flower
The garden of my heart was drest;
A single tree has sprung to bloom,
Whose branches cast a tender gloom,
That shadows all the rest.

II.

A jealous and a tyrant tree,
That seeks to reign alone;
As if the wind's melodious sighs,
The dews and sunshine of the skies,
Were only made for One!

III.

A tree on which the Host of Dreams
Low-murmur mystic things,
While Hopes, those birds of other skies,
To Dreams themselves chant low replies—
Ah, wherefore have they wings?

IV.

The Seasons nurse the blight and storm,
The glory leaves the air—
The Dreams and Birds will pass away,
The blossom wither from the spray—
One day—the stem be bare;—

V.

But mine has grown the Dryad's life,
Coæval with the Tree.
The sun, the frost, the bloom, the fall,
My fate, sweet Tree, must share them all,
To live and die with thee!

THE CONSOLATIONS OF SLEEP.

I.

COME to me, Night, that I with HER may be!
For duly o'er the deep
Of the moon-lighted sleep,
Boundeth that Bark—the Soul, to reach
Her presence by the lonely beach,
Of some fair Dream, the Isle in that Enchanted Sea.

II.

Are ye *not* Isles of flowers and fairy ground,
Ye shadow-peopled Dreams?
Isles by whose lulling streams
And thick-leaved woods, the shapes we view,
We pined for most the daylight through,
Where Psyche nightly roves, and clasps her Eros found?

III.

Come, Night, that I may be with HER once more
In the far land and lone,
Where she is all my own;

Where, till the jealous day-star shine,
Beyond this life a life divine
Unites divided Souls along the Elysian shore!

THE LOVE LETTER.

As grains of gold that in the sands
Of Lydian waters shine,
The welcome sign of mountain lands
That veil the silent mine—

Thus may the River of my Thought,
That glideth now to thee,
Reveal the wealth as yet unwrought,
Which Love has heap'd in me!

So strove I to enrich the scroll
To thy dear hands consign'd;
I thought to leave the lavish soul
No golden wish behind!

Ah, Fool! to think an hour could drain
What life can scarce explore—
Enough, if guided by the grain,
Thy heart should seek the ore!

THE LAY OF THE MINSTREL'S HEART.

It was the time when Spring on Earth
  Gives Eden to the young;—
On Provençe shone the Vesper star;
Beneath fair Marguerite's lattice-bar
The Minstrel, Aymer, sung—

"The year may take a second birth,
  But May is swift of wing;
The Heart whose sunshine lives in thee
One May from year to year shall see;—
  Thy love, eternal spring!"

The Ladye blushed, the Ladye sigh'd,
  All Heaven was in that Hour!
The Heart he pledged was leal and brave—
And what the pledge the Ladye gave?—
  —Her hand let fall a flower!

And when shall Aymer claim his Bride?
  It is the Hour to part!
He goes to guard the Saviour's grave;—
Her pledge, a flower, the Maiden gave,
  And *his*—the Minstrel's heart!

Behold, a Cross, a Grave, a Foe!
What else—Man's Holy Land?
High deeds, that level Rank to Fame,
Have bought young Aymer's right to claim
The high-born Maiden's hand.

High deeds should ask no meed below—
Their guerdon in the sky!
The poison-dart, in Victory's hour,
Has pierced the Heart where lies the flower,
And hers its latest sigh!

It is the time when Spring on Earth
Gives Eden to the young,
And harp and hymn proclaim the Bride,
Who smiles, Count Raimond, by thy side,—
The Maid whom Aymer sung!

And, darkly through the wassail mirth,
A pale procession see!—
Turn, Marguerite, from the bridegroom turn—
Thine Aymer's heart—the funeral urn,—
His pledge, comes back to thee!

Lo, on the Urn how wither'd lies
Thy gift—the scentless flower!
Amidst those garlands, fresh and fair,
That prank the hall and glad the air,
What does that wither'd flower?

One tear bedew'd the Ladye's eyes,
No tears beseem the day.
The dead can nôt to life return,
" A marble tomb shall grace the Urn,"
She said, and turn'd away.

The marble rose the Urn above,
The World went on the same;
The Ladye smil'd, Count Raimond's bride,
And flowers, like hers, that bloom'd and died,
Each May returning came.

The faded flower, the dream of love,
The poison and the dart,
The tearful trust, the smiling wrong,
The tomb,—behold, O Child of Song,
The History of thy Heart!

THE MASTER TO THE SCHOLAR.

WRITE for the pedant Few, the vein shall grow
Cold at its source and meagre in its flow;
But for the vulgar Many wouldst thou write,
How coarse the passion, and the thought how
trite!
" Nor Few, nor Many—riddles from thee fall?"
Author, as Nature smiles—so write;—for ALL!

THE BEAUTIFUL DESCENDS NOT.

IN Cyprus, looking on the lovely sky,
Lone by the marge of music-haunted streams,
A youthful Poet prayed—" Descend from high,
Thou of whose face each youthful Poet dreams.
O Venus! once more to the Earth be given
The Beauty that makes beautiful the Heaven."

Swift to a silver cloudlet, floating o'er,
A rushing Presence rapt him as he pray'd.
What He beheld I know not;—but once more
The midnight heard him sighing to the shade,—

" Again—again unto the Earth be given
The Beauty that makes beautiful the Heaven."

A sweet voice answered from the distant star—
" Vainly did Venus grace on thee bestow—
Unworthy he the loftier realms afar,
Who wooes the gods above to earth below;
Rapt to the Beautiful thy soul must be,
And not the Beautiful debased to thee!"

THE BONES OF RAPHAEL.

When the author was in Rome, in the year 1833, the bones of Raphael were discovered, and laid for several days in state in one of the churches.

Wave upon wave, the human ocean streamed
Along the chancel of the solemn pile;
And, with a softer day, the tapers beamed
Upon the Bier within the vaulted aisle:—
And, mingled with the crowd, I halted there,
And asked a Roman scholar by my side,—
What sainted dust invok'd the common prayer?
" Stranger!" the man, as in disdain, replied,
" Nine days already hath the Disinterred

Been given again to mortal eye, and all
The Great of Rome, the Conclave and the Pope,
Have flock'd to grace the second funeral
Of him whose soul, until it fled, like Hope,
Gave Beauty to the World:—But haply thou,
A dweller of the North, hast never heard
Of one who, if no saint in waking life,
In dreams commùned with angels, and transferred
The Heaven in which we trust his soul is now
To the mute canvass.—Underneath that pall
Repose the bones of Raphael!"—
Not a word
I answered, but in awe I drew more near,
And saw the crowd toil on in busy strife,
Eager which first should touch the holy bier;
I ask'd a boor more earnest than the rest,
"Whose bones are these?"
"I know not what his name;
But, since the Pope and Conclave have been here,
Doubtless a famous Saint!"—
The Boor exprest
The very thought the wandering stranger guest.

Which wiser, he, the Scholar, who had sneer'd
To hear the Stranger canonize the Dead;
Or they, the Boor, the Stranger, who revered
The Saint, where he the Artist?—Answer, Fame,
Whose Saints are not the Calendar's! Perchance
Tasso and Raphael, age to age, have given
The earth a lustre more direct from Heaven
Than San Gennaro, or thy Dennis, France,
Or English George!—Read History.*—
When the crowd
Were gone, I slipped some coins into the hand
Of a grave-visaged Priest, who took his stand
Beside the Bier, and bade him lift the shroud;
And there I paused, and gazed upon the all
The Worm had spared to Raphael.—He had died,
As sang the Alfieri of our land,

* Gibbon, after a powerful sketch of the fraud, the corruption, and the vices of George the Cappadocian, thus concludes—"The odious stranger, disguising every circumstance of time and place, assumed the mask of a martyr, a saint, and a Christian hero; and the infamous George of Cappadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and the garter."—*Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, vol. iv., c. xxiii

In the embrace of Beauty*—beautiful
Himself as Cynthia's Shepherd!—That, the skull
Once pillowed on soft bosoms, which still rise
With passionate life, in canvass;—in the void
Of those blank sockets shone the starry eyes,
That, *like* the stars, found home in heaven! The pall
With its dark hues, gave forth, in gleaming white,
The delicate bones; for still an undestroy'd
Beauty, amidst decay, appeared to dwell
About the mournful relics; and the light,
In crownlike halo, lovingly did fall
On the broad brow,—the hush'd and ruined cell
Of the old Art—Nature's sweet Oracle!
Believe or not, no horror seemed to wrap
What has most horror for our life—the Dead:
The sleep slept soft, as in a mother's lap,
As if the Genius of the Grecian Death,
That with a kiss inhaled the parting breath,
That, wing'd for Heaven, stood by the charnel porch,
Lowering, with looks of love, the' extinguished torch,

* "Italian Beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace?"—BYRON.

Had taken watch beside the narrow bed;
And from the wrecks of the beloved clay
Had scared, with guardian eyes, each ghastlier
shape away!

Come, Moralist, with truths of tritest worth,
And tell us how " to this complexion" all
That beautify the melancholy earth
" Must come at last!" The little and the
low,
The mob of common men, rejoice to know
How the grave levels with themselves the
great:
For something in the envy of the small
Still loves the vast Democracy of Death!
But flatter not yourselves—in death the fate
Of genius still divides itself from yours:
Yea, ev'n upon the earth! For Genius lives
Not in your life — it does not breathe your
breath,
It does not share your charnels;—but ensures
In death itself the life that life survives!
Genius to you what most you value gave,
The noisy forum and the glittering mart,
The solid goods and mammon of the world,

In *these* your life—and *these* with life depart!
Grudge not what Genius to itself shall claim—
A life that lived but in the dreams of Art,
A world whose sunshine was the smile from Fame.
These die not, Moralist, when all are hurl'd,
Fasces and sceptre, in the common grave:—
Genius, in life or death, is still the same—
Death but makes deathless what Life asked—THE NAME.

THE LADY AND THE DOGS.

FROM THE FABLIAUX.

Sir Gawaine now his bride had won, and side by side they rode
To where from Carduel's stately towers the Dragon-banner flowed;
With loving looks and sweet discourse the bridegroom cheered the way,
When, "Oh," the lady cried, "my dogs, my darlings, where are they?"

Back Gawaine rides, and gains the gates, (the dogs were left behind,)
God's wot, may ladies newly wed a Gawaine ever find!
Then to the Fair he spurs with speed; the Fair delighted sees
Her favourites' white and dappled hues come gleaming through the trees;
And on they ride, and on they ride, when in the darksome wood
Before them, arm'd from head to foot, a sturdy stranger stood.
With iron hand he rudely seized the lady's bridle rein;
Out flash'd the sword, out spake the wrath, of that good knight, Gawaine.
" Though mine be but the silken vest, and thine the iron mail,
A loyal heart can guard its prize, whatever foes assail;
So foot to foot, and steel to steel"—
" Nay," quoth the Stranger Knight,
" Not thine by choice this Damsel, if I read her eyes aright;

What need of blows? No lady's smile can lure
us back to life—
Let her who is the cause, herself, in peace decide
the strife;
Retire we both a certain space, and leave the
Lady free,
And whomsoe'er her steps shall seek, his prize
the Lady be."
" Content," Sir Gawaine gaily said; " the world
will pass away
Before that heart forsakes the faith it vowed to
me to-day."
On either side the Knights retire, the Lady rests
between,
She eyes the Stranger's rusted mail, Sir Gawaine's
silken sheen,
A laidley, grim, rough-bearded carle the stranger
was to view,
A comelier knight than Gawaine ne'er, the Bower
of Beauty knew:—
With wistful gaze she looked, compared, and
weighed and scanned them o'er,
Then slowly paced to choose the man she ne'er
had seen before.

Amazement first, and then disdain, struck dumb
Sir Gawaine's voice;
He turned his steed, and calmly left the Lady to
her choice.
But scarce some thirty roods or so, the Knight
had gone, before
He heard the ring of hoofs, and lo, that cursed
carle once more!
"The Dogs," he cried, "the dogs, for thine, have
left their Lady's side—
Give back the Dogs!"
"My learned friend," the bride-
less Knight replied,
"By thee, but now, 'twas argued well, to leave
the Lady free;
So leave the Dogs, and whom they choose, his
prize the Dogs shall be."
Ill could the carle, with just reply, that just
demand refuse:
They both retire, and call the brutes:—*the brutes*
no stranger choose.
By many a gentle word and deed, their grace the
Knight had won,
When, through whate'er she loved, his love had
woo'd that faithless one.

"Friend," quoth the Knight, "I thank thee for
the truth thou hast taught to me;
In turn these faithful hounds may teach a lovelier
truth to thee.
Each day beholds a woman's heart from one to
other range,
Each day on friendship's brow beholds the clouds
that tell of change;
And ever to our grave we trace the sad and weary
way,
By smiles or tears, as fleet as those which mark
the April day;
But never yet, in all the books the wisest sage
has read,
Can it be found the Dog deserts the hand that
gives it bread."
He said, and called the Dogs, and rode upon his
careless way;
Back went the Stranger to the Fair—no doubt
he was as gay;—
But which the lot to envy most, ye married men
decide—
The happy bridegroom got the Dogs—that
wretched man the Bride!

LOVE AND FAME.

I.

It was the May when I was born,
Soft moonlight through the casement streamed,
And still, as it were yester-morn,
I dream the dream I dreamed.
I saw two forms from Fairy Land,
Along the moonbeam gently glide,
Until they halted, hand in hand,
My infant couch beside.

II.

With smiles, the cradle bending o'er,
I heard their whispered voices breathe—
The one a crown of diamond wore,
The one a myrtle wreath;
"Twin brothers from the Better Clime,
A Poet's spell hath lured to thee;
Say which shall, in the coming time,
Thy chosen Fairy be?"

III.

I stretched my hand, as if my grasp
  Could snatch the toy from either brow;
And found a leaf within my clasp,
  One leaf—as fragrant now!
If both in life may not be won,
  Be mine, at least, the gentler brother—
For he whose life deserves the one,
  In death may gain the other.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE EYES.

Those eyes—those eyes—how full of heaven they
  are,
When the calm twilight leaves the heaven
  most holy,
Tell me, sweet eyes, from what divinest star,
Did ye drink in your liquid melancholy?
  Tell me, beloved Eyes!

Was it from yon lone orb, that ever by
The quiet moon, like Hope on Patience, hovers,

The Star to which hath sped so many a sigh,
Since lutes in Lesbos hallowed it to lovers?
Was that your Fount, sweet Eyes?

Ye Sibyl Books, in which the truths foretold,
Inspire the Heart, your dreaming Priest, with gladness,
Bright Alchemists that turn to Thoughts of Gold
The leaden cares ye steal away from sadness,
Teach only me, sweet Eyes!

Hush! when I ask ye how, at length, to gain
The cell where Love the Sleeper yet lies hidden,
Loose not those arch lips from their rosy chain;
Be every answer, save your own, forbidden—
Feelings are words for Eyes!

LOVE'S EXAGGERATIONS: A DEFENCE.

The passion of the mightiest shell
That ever rapt the choir above,
Were all too weak and cold to tell
The warm extravagance of love.

Thought's deepest mines the soul will seek,
Or speed to Fancy's airiest height,
In search of aught that best can speak
The Symbol-Worship of Delight.

Image far-wrought and rich conceit,
Familiar to its household tongue;—
So the same purple thoughts we meet
By Avon or Ilissus sung.*

In every land, Love's language still
A sacred learning to the few;
A folly to *their* solemn skill,
Who hold the Real for the True;—

Fount of the lavish, joyous youth,
It sports with every star above;—
Give sober words to meaner truth,
The wildest to the truths of Love?

* Compare the well-known extravagance—
"O, that I were a glove upon that hand,"
with a similar thought in Anacreon, Od. xx.

DOUBT.

BRIGHT laughs the sun, the Birds that are to Air
Like Song to Life,—are gaily on the wing,
In every mead the handmaid Hours prepare
The delicates of Spring;—*
But, if she love me not!

To me at this fair season still hath been
In every wild-flower an exhaustless treasure,
And, when the young-eyed violet first was seen,
Methought to breathe was pleasure;—
But, if she love me not!

How, in thy twilight, DOUBT, at each unknown
Dim shape, the superstitious Love will start;
How Hope itself will tremble at its own
Light shadow on the heart;—
Ah, if she love me not!

Well; I will know the worst, and leave the wind
To drift or drown the venture on the wave;
Life has two friends in grief itself most kind—
Remembrance and the Grave—
Mine, if she love me not!

* "The choicest delicates from yonder mead."
THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS.

THE ASSURANCE.

I AM loved, I am loved—Jubilate!
Hark! hark! how the happy note swells,
To and fro from the fairy bells,
With which the Flowers melodiously
To their banquet-halls invite the bee!—
He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate!

The Echo at rest on her mountain-keep,
Murmurs the sound in her broken sleep—
He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate!
And those gossips, the winds, have come to scout
What the earth is so happy about,
And they catch the sound, and circle it round—
He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate!

And the Rivers, whom all the world must know,
Were in love with the stars ever since they could flow,
With a dimpled cheek and a joyous sigh,
Whisper it up to the list'ning sky,
He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate!

It is not the world that I knew before;
Where is the gloom that its glory wore?
Not a foe could offend, or a friend betray,
Old Hatred hath gone to his grave to-day!
Hark! hark, his knell we toll,
Here's to the peace of his sinful soul!
On the earth below, in the heaven above,
Nothing is left us now but love.
Love, love, honour to love,
I am loved, I am loved—Jubilate!

THE MAIDEN'S GRAVE.

A TALE.

"YONDER distant hill," said Hyppolyte, "is called the grave of Krak, whom History mentions as the first King of Poland; but the other, which is nearer to us, and looks so dismal, is called the Sepulchral Monument of his daughter Vanda. An early love had united the hearts of Vanda, Queen of Poland, and of Ritiger, Duke of Arkona, in the Isle of Rugen. However, when the murder of a brother, and the punishment which befell the guilty, called the daughter of Krak to the throne, the Sarmatian nation disapproved the alliance of their Queen with a foreigner, and the call of Duty, proved stronger than the voice of Love," &c.—BRONIKOWSKI's Court of Sigismund Augustus, translated by Count Kucinski, vol. i. p. 59.

The concluding portion of the History of Vanda is related in the following Poem.

SEEST thou yon twain opposing steeps?
No wild-flower glads their solemn gloom;
There old Sclavonia's hero sleeps,
And there his Hero-Daughter's tomb!

When careless youth is on the wing,
The heart but o'er the heart would reign—
She was the Daughter of a King—
She loved, and was beloved again!

And proud her choice, and fair her fate
Before her visions seem'd to smile;
What maid too high to be thy mate,
Young Prince of Rugen's Warrior-Isle?

Ah! not to Kaisar and to King
Hath Love his happy Eden sold;
The hearts that sleep beneath his wing,
The meanest hut hath space to hold!*

And joy, they weave her bridal wreath,
And joy, he comes to claim his own;—
And woe, she weeps a Brother's death,
And woe, she mounts a Brother's throne!

Alas! the Maiden Monarch now
The crown, and not the wreath, must wear;
The crown that weighs above thy brow,
A stranger's temples may not bear!

* "Raum ist in der kleinsten Hûtte
Fur ein glücklich liebend Paar."—SCHILLER.

The low need envy not the great
When Greatness is unshared with Love;—
The lonely heart in robes of state,—
The Orb unshadowed by the Dove!

But Vanda is a Hero's child,
The Mother of a Hero's land;
They saw not—when the Martyr smil'd,
And, calm, resigned the plighted hand,—

They saw not how, that smile below,
Realms fairer than Sarmatia lay,
A desert never more to know
The opening eyelids of the day!

Not Tadmor, in its lone repose,
Its wrecks to wandering eye reveals,
More sad amidst the waste—than those,
One broken human heart conceals!

"Up, spear and lance, my Liegemen all!
My Lady's choice shall vassals bind?—
A Monarch's heart shall rebels thrall?
No!—give my banners to the wind!"

Along yon valleys, sheen and far,
Arkona's steel-clad legions lay;
And bright, beneath the steadfast star,
The River rush'd its glittering way.

From yonder cliff, whose gloom of shade
Half wrapt the starlight from the foe,
Sclavonia's Virgin Queen survey'd
The warfare and the peace below;

She saw the pastoral huts, where beat
Brave hearts entrusted to her care;
And, like their shrouds, beneath her feet
The ghastly war-tents whitening there!

She saw the joyous River glide,
With peaceful banks on either shore;
To-morrow, and the starry tide
Runs crimson with a people's gore!

And, darkly fronting, looms the steep
Where her great Father's dust is laid;
And, waking from the' invaded sleep,
His ghost seems frowning in the shade!

Before her soul, as in her sight,
The Lover's and the Country's Cause;—
A Voice thrill'd through the sullen night—
"Child of a Hero, canst thou pause?"

High heaved her heart, and to her cheek
A blush, half pride, half shame, was given;
Calm through the blue eye seemed to break
The thought that comes in light from Heaven.

"Accept the sacrifice," she said,
And raised her solemn arms on high;
Why sudden droops that lofty head?—
Where—the last weakness—turns the eye?

One glance—but one, where, glittering, sleep
The tents of that beloved Foe;—
Flash'd the white robe—and from the steep
She plunged into the stream below!

The stream below received its prey,
The starlight darkened from the wave;
But Glory shall outlive the ray,
And Memory is the Martyr's Grave!*

* The story adds that the enemy retired.

THE POET SINGS TO THE YOUNG.

A THOUGHT FROM HORACE.

"Virginibus — puerisque canto."

Far hence, ye Herd Profane!—along
These aisles each earthlier sound hath ceast;
For Holy is the Altar-Song,
And holy is the Poet-Priest!

Far hence, ye Herd Profane—oh, ne'er
For ye the Nine's melodious truth;
The Priest but calls around him, there,
The Virgin and the Soul of Youth.

The Godlike Hierophant conceals
From vulgar eyes the solemn rite;
But to the Pure alone reveals
The Eleusinia of Delight.

Yes, then along the charmed floor
The gods of old, descending, glide;
And mists o'er mortal eyes no more
Elysium from the Earth divide!

Priest-Poet, yes!—in every age
  Virgin and Youth thine Audience be!
The Pure alone can in thy page
  The Vision and the Glory see!

Mourn not, if scorned by those who are
  The vulgar herd *without* the shrine—
Through fogs and clouds, the Hesper Star
  Disdains on troubled streams to shine;—

Its home, an unpolluted sky—
  Its glass, O stillest wave thou art!
And still the gaze must turn on high,
  To feel its influence on the heart!

So does the Poet, from the Hour
  Escape unto the farther years;
That thou mayst almost doubt the power
  Of Him the passing Hour reveres;—

From his lone height he sings to those
  Who linger, Youth, in thy green vale—
A Fairy yet in every rose,
  An Angel's wing in every gale.

They, the Endymions, o'er whose sleep
Watches the Moon's enamoured eye,—
The Ganymedes, for whom there sweep
God's eagles from the world on high,—

They who yet dream, and yet aspire,—
For them, the holy chord is strung;—
Far hence, ye Herd Profane!—the lyre
Invokes the Virgin and the Young!

EURIPIDES.

Lone, 'mid the loftier wonders of the Past,
Thou stand'st—more household to the modern age;—
In a less stately mould thy thoughts were cast
Than thy twin Masters of the Grecian stage.
Thou mark'st that change in Manners when the frown
Of the vast Titans vanish'd from the earth,
When a more soft Philosophy stole down
From the dark heavens to man's familiar hearth.

With thee, came Love and Woman's influence o'er
Her sterner Lord; and Poesy till then
A Sculpture, warmed to Painting;* what before
Glass'd but the dim-seen Gods, grew now to men
Clear mirrors, and the Passions took their place,
Where a serene if solemn Awe had made
The Scene a Temple to the Elder Race:
The struggles of Humanity became
Not those of Titan with a God, nor those
Of the great Heart with that unbodied Name
By which our ignorance would explain our woes
And justify the Heavens, — the ruthless FATE;—
But, truer to the human life, thine art
Made thought with thought and will with will debate,
And placed the God and Titan in the Heart;

* The celebrated comparison between Sculpture and the Antient, Painting and the Modern Dramatic Poetry, is not applicable to Euripides, who has a warmth and colour of passion which few, indeed, of the moderns have surpassed, and from which most of the modern writers have mediately, if not directly, borrowed their most animated conceptions.

Thy Phædra, and thy pale Medea were
The birth of that more subtle wisdom, which
Dawn'd in the world with Socrates, to bear
Its last most precious offspring in the rich
And genial soul of Shakspeare. And for this
Wit blamed thee living, Dullness taunts thee
dead.*
And yet the Pythian did not speak amiss

* Among the taunting accusations which Aristophanes, in his Comedy of the Frogs, lavishes upon Euripides, through the medium of Æschylus, is that of having introduced female love upon the stage! Æschylus, indeed, is made, very inconsistently, considering his Clytemnestra, (Ran: l. 1042) to declare that he does not know that *he* ever represented a single woman in love. At a previous period of the comedy, Euripides is also ridiculed, through a boast ironically assigned to his own lips, for having debased Tragedy, by the introduction of domestic interest—(household things, *οἰκεῖα πράγματα.*) Upon these and similar charges have later critics, partly in England, especially in Germany, sought by duller diatribes to perpetuate a spirit of depreciation against the only antient dramatic poet who has vitally influenced the later stage. The true merit of Euripides is seen in the very ridicule of Aristophanes. There, may sound criticism find the answer to all his pedant detractors, from Longinus, who was almost as wretched a critic as, now-a-days, an English reviewer—to—but the sneerers of our own time have not even established the privilege to be named!

When in thy verse the latent truths she read,
And hailed thee wiser than thy tribe.* Of thee
All genius in our softer times hath been
The grateful echo, and thy soul we see
Still through our tears—upon the later Scene.
Doth the Italian, for his frigid thought
Steal but a natural pathos,—hath the Gaul
Something of passion to his phantoms taught,
Ope but thy page—and, lo, the source of all!—
But that which made thee wiser than the Schools
Was the long sadness of a much-wrong'd life;
The sneer of satire, and the gibe of fools,
The broken hearth-gods, and the perjured wife.
For Sorrow is the Messenger between
The Poet and Men's bosoms:—Genius can
Fill with unsympathizing Gods the Scene,
But Grief alone can teach us what is Man!

* "Wise Sophocles, wiser Euripides, wisest of all, Socrates," was the well-known decision of the Delphian Oracle. Yet the wisdom of Euripides was not in the philosophical sentences with which he often mars the true philosophy of the drama. His wisdom is his pathos.

THE POPE AND THE BEGGAR.

The Desires the chains, the Deeds the wings.

I SAW a Soul beside the clay it wore,
When reign'd that clay the Hierarch-Sire of Rome;
A hundred priests stood, ranged the bier before,
Within St. Peter's dome;

And all was incense, solemn dirge, and prayer—
And still the Soul stood sullen by the clay:
"O Soul, why to thy heavenlier native air
Dost thou not soar away?"

And the Soul answered, with a ghastly frown,
"In what life loved, death finds its weal or woe;
Slave to the clay's DESIRES, they drag me down
To the clay's rot below!"

It spoke, and where Rome's Purple Ones reposed,
They lower'd the corpse; and downwards from the sun
Both Soul and Body sunk—and Darkness closed
Over that twofold one!

Without the church, unburied on the ground,
There lay, in rags, a Beggar newly dead;
Above the dust, no holy priest was found,
No pious prayer was said!

But round the corpse unnumbered lovely things,
Hovering, unseen by the proud passers by,
Form'd, upward, upward, upward, with bright wings,
A ladder to the sky!

"And what are ye, O Beautiful?" "We are,"
Answered the choral cherubim, "His Deeds!"
Then his Soul, sparkling sudden as a star,
Flashed from its mortal weeds,

And, lightly passing, tier on tier, along
The gradual pinions, vanish'd like a smile!
Just then, swept by the solemn-visaged throng
From the Apostle's pile—

"Knew ye this beggar?" "Knew! a wretch, who
died
Under the curse of our good Pope, now gone!"
"Loved ye that Pope?" "He was our Church's
pride,
And Rome's most holy Son!"

Then did I muse:—Such are men's judgments;—
blind
In scorn or love! In what unguest-of things,
DESIRES, or DEEDS—do rags and purple find
The fetters or the wings!

TALENT AND GENIUS.

(Suggested by a passage in Goethe's Correspondence with a Child.)

TALENT convinces—Genius but excites;
This tasks the reason, that the soul delights.
Talent from sober judgment takes its birth,
And reconciles the pinion to the earth;

Genius unsettles with desires the mind,
Contented not till earth be left behind;
Talent, the sunshine on a cultured soil,
Ripens the fruit, by slow degrees, for toil.
Genius, the sudden Iris of the skies,
On cloud itself reflects its wondrous dies:
And, to the earth, in tears and glory, given,
Clasps in its airy arch the pomp of Heaven!
Talent gives all that vulgar critics need—
From its plain horn-book learn the Dull to read;
Genius, the Pythian of the Beautiful,
Leaves its large truths a riddle to the Dull—
From eyes profane a veil the Isis screens,
And fools on fools still ask—'what Hamlet means?'

THE TRUE CRITIC.

Taste is to sense, as Charity to soul,
A bias less to censure than to praise;
A quick perception of the arduous whole,
Where the dull eye some careless flaw surveys

Every true critic—from the Stagirite
To Schlegel and to Addison—hath won
His fame by serving a reflected light,
And clearing vapour from a clouded sun.
Who envies him whose microscopic eyes
See but the canker in the glorious rose?
Not much I ween the Zoilus we prize,
Though even Homer may at moments doze.
Praise not to me the sharp sarcastic sneer,
Mocking the Fane which Genius builds to Time.
High works are Sabbaths to the Soul! Revere
Ev'n some rare discord in the solemn chime.
When on the gaze the Venus dawns divine,
The Cobbler comes the slipper to condemn;
The Slave alone descends into the mine
To work the dross—the Monarch wears the gem.

GANYMEDE.

"When Ganimedes was caught up to Heaven, he let fall his pipe on which he was playing to his sheep."—ALEXANDER ROSS, Myst. Poet.

UPON the Phrygian hill
He sate, and on his reed the Shepherd play'd;
The noonbeam glinted thro' the greenwood shade,
And every wind was still.

He saw not where, on high,
The noiseless eagle of the Heavenly King
Rested;—till rapt upon the rushing wing
Into the opening sky.

Then, from this sad world freed,
A destined God,—below his glance he cast,
And felt how poor the music of the Past,
And dropt the idle reed!

So he whom Thought divine,
Bears to that life the calm Celestials know,
Must for the' Empyreal Element resign
All that seem'd sweet below!

MEMNON.

Where Morning first appears,
Waking the rathe flowers in their Eastern bed,
Aurora still, with her ambrosial tears,
Weeps for her Memnon dead.
Him, the Hesperides
Nurs'd on the margent of their golden shore,
And still the smile that then the Mother wore
Dimples the orient seas.

He died, and, lo! the while
The fire consumed his ashes, glorious things,
With joyous song and wonder-tinted wings,
Rose from the funeral pile.
He died,—and yet became
A music, and his Theban image broke
Into sweet sounds that, with each sunrise, spoke
The Mighty Mother's name.

Beautiful Parable!
Typing in golden thoughts the death and birth
Of that which glads and sanctifies the earth
On which we dwell;—

Leaving, in scatheless youth,
A Music-Image, with enchanted voices
Answering the Light that on its front rejoices—
The Christian's Memnon-Truth!

MEMORIES, THE FOOD OF LOVE.

When shall we come to that delightful day,
When each can say to each, "*Dost thou remember?*"
Let us fill urns with rose leaves in our May,
And hive the thrifty sweetness for December!

For who may deem the Reign of Love secure,
Till in a mighty Past is built his throne?—
Hope is a star each vapour can obscure,
Memory, the only empire, all our own.

'Tis the Hearts' Home to have a World in Time,
Of Happy Thoughts that we have known before;
Hearing, in common words, the holy chime
Of those sweet sabbath-bells—the Dreams of yore.

Oft dost thou ask me, with that bashful eye,
" If I shall love thee evermore as now?"
Feasting as fondly on the sure reply,
As if my lips were virgin of the vow!

Sweet does that question, " Wilt thou love me?" fall
Upon the heart that has forsworn its will;
But when the words hereafter we recall,
" *Dost thou remember?*" — shall be sweeter still!

LOVERS' QUARRELS—AN OLD MAXIM REFUTED.

They never loved as thou and I,
Who ministered the moral,
That aught which deepens love can lie
In true love's lightest quarrel.

They never knew, in times of fear,
The safety of affection,
Nor sought, when angry Fate drew near,
Love's Altar for protection;—

They never knew how Kindness grows
A vigil and a care,
Nor watch'd beside the heart's repose
In silence and in prayer;

For weaker loves be storms enough
To frighten back Desire;
We have no need of gales so rough
To fan our steadier fire.

'Twere sweet to kiss thy tears away,
If tears those eyes must know;
But sweeter still to hear thee say,
"Thou never bad'st them flow."

The wrongful word will rankling live
When wrong itself hath ceast,
And Love, that all things may forgive,
Can ne'er forget the least.

If pain can nòt from life depart,
There's pain enough around us;
The rose we wear upon the heart
Should have no thorn to wound us.

And hollow sounds the wildest vow,
If Memory wake, the while,
The bitter taunt—the darkened brow,
The stinging of a smile.

There is no anguish like the hour,
Whatever else befall us,
When One the heart has raised to power
Exerts it but to gall us.

Yet if—this calm too blest to last—
Some cloud, at times, must be,
I'm not so proud but I would cast
The fault alone on me.

So deeply blent with thy dear thought,
All faith in human kindness,
Methinks if thou couldst change in aught,
The only bliss were blindness.

But no—if Rapture may not last,
It ne'er shall bring Regret,
Nor leave one look in all the Past
'Twere mercy to forget.

Repentance often finds too late,
To wound us is to harden;
And Love is on the verge of Hate,
Each time it stoops for Pardon.

THE ATHENIAN AND THE SPARTAN.

A DIALOGUE.

THE ATHENIAN.

Stern Prisoner in thy rites of old
To Learning blind, to Beauty cold,—
Never for thee, with garlands crown'd,
The lyre and myrtle circle round;
Dull to the Lesbian ruby's froth,
Thou revellest in thy verjuice broth.
With Phidian art our temples shine,
Like mansions meet for gods divine;
Thou think'st *thy* gods despise such toys,
And shrines are made—for scourging boys;
As triflers, thou canst only see
The Drama's Kings—our glorious Three.

No Plato fires your youth to thinking,
Your nobler school,—in Helots drinking!
Contented as your sires before—
The Little makes ye loathe The More.
We, ever pushing forward, still
Take power, where powerless, from the will;
We, ever straining at the All,
With hands that grasp when feet may fall,*—
Earth, ocean,—near and far,—we roam,
Where Fame, where Fortune,—there a home!
You hold all progress degradation,
Improvement but degeneration,
And only wear your scarlet coat
When self-defence must cut a throat.
Yet ev'n in war, your only calling,
A snail would beat your best at crawling;
We slew the Mede at Marathon,
While you were gazing at the moon! †
Pshaw, man, lay by these antique graces,
True wisdom hates such solemn faces!
Spartans, if only livelier fellows,
Would make ev'n us a little jealous!

* Thucyd., lib. 1, c. 68—71. (The Speech of the Corinthians.)

† Herod., lib. 6, c. 120.

THE SPARTAN, *calmly.*

Friend, Spartans when they need improvement
Take models not from endless movement.
We found our sires the lords of Greece;—
Ask'd why? this answer—"Laws and Peace."
Enough for us to hold our own;
Who grasps at shadows risks the bone.
You're ever up, and ever down,—
There's something fix'd in True Renown.
The New has charms for men, I'm told;
Granted,—but all our gods are old.
Better to imitate a god
Than shift like men.

THE ATHENIAN, *impatiently.*

You are so odd!
There is no sense in these laconics.
Ho, Dromio! bring my last Platonics.
This mode of arguing, though emphatic,
Is quite eclipsed by the Socratic.

SPARTAN.

Friend—

ATHENIAN.

You have said. Now listen! Peace!

SPARTAN.

Friend—

ATHENIAN.

Gods! his tongue will never cease!
I tell you, man is made for walking,
Not standing still.

SPARTAN.

My friend—

ATHENIAN.

And talking!
Forward's my motto—life and motion!

SPARTAN.

Mine be the Rock, as thine the Ocean.

TIME.

Discuss, ye symbols of the twain
Great Creeds — THE STEADFAST AND IMPROVING;
The one shall rot that would remain,
The one wear out in moving!

THE PHILANTHROPIST AND THE MISANTHROPE.

A DIALOGUE.

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

YES, thou mayst sneer, but still I own
A love that spreads from zone to zone:
No time the sacred fire can smother!
Where breathes the man, I hail the brother.
Man! how sublime,—from Heaven his birth—
The God's bright Image walks the earth!
And if, at times, his footstep strays,
I pity where I may not praise.

THE MISANTHROPE.

Thou lov'st mankind. Pray tell me, then,
What history best excuses men?
Long wars for slight pretences made,
See murder but a glorious trade;
Each landmark from the savage state,
Doth virtue or a vice create?
Do ships speed plenty o'er the main?—
What swells the sail? The lust of gain!

What makes a law where laws were not?
Strength's wish to keep what Strength has got!
If rise a Few—the true sublime,
Who lend the light of Heaven to Time,
What the return the Many make?
See Athens' bowl! and Lisbon's stake!
Thou lov'st mankind,—come tell me, then,
Lov'st thou the past career of men?

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

Nay, little should I love mankind,
If their dark PAST my praise could find,
It is because—

THE MISANTHROPE.

A moment hold!
Enough gone times; *our own* behold!
What lessons doth a past of woe
And crime upon our age bestow?
How few amongst the tribes of earth
Are rescued from the primal wild;
What countless lands the oceans girth,
By savage rites and gore defil'd!

Afric'—a mart of human flesh;
Asia—a satrapy of slaves!
And yonder tracts from Nature fresh,
Worn empires fill with knaves?
Nay; turn to Europe's happier clime,
Ausonia see, a ruined realm!
A shipwreck in the storms of time,
With San Gennaro at the helm!
Say, did the latest Goth bequeath
To Spain a darker midnight than
Our eyes have seen in horror breathe
Along those fairest shores of man?
Turn'st thou to France?—in streams of gore,
The phantoms of thy folly see;
The butcher-race the sophists bore
Were but—Philanthropists, like thee!
And for what end the ghastly shrouds,
The shatter'd thrones, the crimson'd ermines?
New forts for kings to laugh at crowds,
A railway to St. Germains!
Are men at home more good and wise?
My friend, thou readst the daily papers;
Perchance, thou see'st but laughing skies,
Where I but mists and vapours.

But much the same seems each disease.
What most improv'd? The doctor's fees!
The Law can still oppress the Weak,
The Proud still march before the Meek.
Still crabbed Age and heedless Youth;
Still Power perplex'd, asks "What is Truth?"
To no result our squabbles come:
To some what's best is worst to some.
The few the cake amongst them carve,
And labourers sweat and poets starve;
And Envy still on Genius feeds,
And not one modest man succeeds.
All much the same for prince and peasant—
I've done.—How dost thou love the PRESENT?

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

'Tis not man's Present or man's Past;
Beyond, man's friend his eye must cast.
Must see him break each galling fetter;
To gain the best, desire the better—
From Discontent itself we borrow
The glorious yearnings for the morrow;
Science and Truth like waves advance
Upon the antique Ignorance.

THE MISANTHROPE.

Like waves—the image not amiss!
They gain on that side—lose on this;
Pleased, after fifty ages, if
They gulp at last an inch of cliff.

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

You really cannot think by satire,
To mine the truths you cannot batter;
Man's destinies are bright'ning slowly,
With them entwined each thought most holy.
What though the PAST my horror moves,
No Eden though the PRESENT seems,
Who loves Mankind, their FUTURE loves,
And trusts, and lives—

THE MISANTHROPE.

In dreams!

WISDOM.

In both extremes there seems conveyed,
A truth to own, and yet deny;
But what between the extremes has made
The master-difference?

HOPE.

I!—

What wert thou, Wisdom, but for me?
Though thou the Past, the Present see,
Through ME alone, the eye can mark
The *Future* dawning on the dark.
I plant the tree, and till the soil;
I shew the fruit,—where thou the toil;
Where thou despondest, I aspire—
Thine sad Content, mine bright Desire.
Under my earthlier name of HOPE,
The love to things unborn is given,
But call me FAITH—behold I ope
The sparkling gates of Heaven!
Take ME from Man, and Man is both
The Dastard and the Slave;
And Love is lust, and Peace a sloth,
And all the Earth a Grave!

TO A WITHERED TREE IN JUNE.*

DESOLATE tree, why are thy branches bare?
What hast thou done,
To win strange winter from the summer air,
Frost from the sun ?

Thou wert not churlish in thy palmier year
Unto the herd ;
Tenderly gav'st thou shelter to the deer,
Home to the bird!

And ever, once, the earliest of the grove,
Thy smiles were gay ;
Opening thy blossoms with the haste of love
To the young May.

Then did the bees, and all the insect wings
Around thee gleam ;
Feaster and darling of the gilded things
That dwell i' the beam.

* These stanzas, and the lines that follow, called "The Last Separation," have been printed before.

Thy liberal course, poor prodigal, is sped!
How lonely now!
How bird and bee, light parasites, have fled
The leafless bough!

Tell me, sad tree, why are thy branches bare?
What hast thou done,
To win strange winter from the summer air,
Frost from the sun?

"Never," replied that forest hermit, lone,
(Old truth and endless!)
"Never for evil done, but fortune flown,
Are we left friendless.

"Yet wholly nor for winter, nor for storm
Doth love depart:
We are not all forsaken till the worm
Creeps to the heart!

"Ah, nought without—within thee, if decay—
Can heal or hurt thee!
Nor boots it, if thy heart itself betray,
Who may desert thee!"

THE LAST SEPARATION.

We shall not rest together, love,
When death has wrenched my heart from thine;
The sun may smile thy grave above,
When clouds are dark on mine!

I know not why, since in the tomb
No instinct fires the silent heart—
And yet it seems a thought of gloom,
That we should ever part;

That, journeying through the toilsome past,
Thus, hand in hand and side by side,
The rest we reach should, at the last,
The weary ones divide;

That the same breezes should not sigh
The self-same funeral boughs among,—
Nor o'er *one* grave, at daybreak, die
The night-bird's lonely song!

A foolish thought!—for *we* are not
The things that rest beneath the sod—
The very shapes we wore forgot,
When near the smile of God.

A foolish thought, yet human, too!
For love is not the soul's alone:
It winds around the form we woo—
The mortal we have known!

The eyes that speak such tender truth—
The lips that every care assuage—
The hand that thrills the heart in youth,
And smoothes the couch in age;

With these—*The Human*—human love
Will twine its thoughts and weave its doom,
And still confound the life above
With death beneath the tomb!

And who shall tell, in yonder skies,
What earthlier instincts we retain—
What link, to souls released, supplies
The old material chain?

The stars that pierced this darksome state
May fade in that meridian shore;
And human love, like human hate,
Be memory—and no more!

We will not think it: for in vain
Were all our dreams of heaven could show,
Without the hope to love again
What we have loved below!

But still the heart will haunt the well
Wherein the golden bowl lies broken,
And treasure, in the narrow cell,
The Past's most holy token!

Or wherefore grieve above the dead?
Why bid the rose-tree o'er them bloom?—
Why fondly deck their dismal bed,
And sanctify the tomb?

'Tis through the form the soul we love;—
And hence the thought will chill the heart,
That, though our souls may meet above,
Our forms shall rest apart!

THE DESIRE OF FAME.

I do confess that I have wish'd to give
My land the gift of no ignoble name,
And, in that holier life, have sought to live
Whose air, the Hope of Fame.

Do I lament that I have seen the bays
Denied my own, not worthier brows above?
Foes quick to scoff and friends afraid to praise?—
More active, Hate than Love!

Do I lament that roseate youth has flown
In the hard labour grudged its niggard meed,
And cull from far and juster lands alone
Few flowers from many a seed?

No!—for whoever, with an earnest soul,
Strives for some end from this low world afar,
Still upward travels though he miss the goal,
And strays—but towards a star!

Better than Fame is still the wish for Fame,
The constant training for a glorious strife:—
The Athlete, nurtured for the Olympian Game,
Gains strength, at least, for Life.

He who desires the conquest over Time
Already lives in some immortal dream,
And the Thought glides beneath the' Ideal Clime
With moonlight on its stream!

I thank thee, Hope, if vain, all blessed still,
For much that makes the soul forget the clay;
The morning dew still balms the sadden'd hill,
Though sun forsakes the day.

And what is Fame but Faith in holy things
That soothe the life and shall outlive the tomb?
A reverent listening for some angel-wings
That cower above the gloom?

To gladden earth with beauty, or men's lives
To serve with Action, or their souls with Truth—
These are the ends for which the Hope survives
The' ignobler thirsts of Youth.

And is not this a Sister-Hope with thee,
Lovely Religion—foe alike to Time?
Does not God's smile light Heaven, on earth to see
Man's faith in ends sublime?

No!—I lament not—though these leaves may fall
From the sear'd branches on the desert plain,
Mock'd by the idle winds that waft—and all
Life's blooms—(its last)—in vain.

If vain for others—*not* in vain for me!—
Who builds an altar let him worship there!
What needs the crowd?—though lone the Shrine may be
Not hallow'd less the Prayer!

Enough if, haply, in the after-days,
When by the altar sleeps the funeral stone—
When gone the mists, our wizard passions raise,
And Truth is seen alone;

When Calumny its prey can wound no more,
And fawns its late repentance on the dead—
If gentle footsteps from some kindlier shore
Pause by the narrow bed;

Or, if yon children, whose young sounds of glee
Float to mine ear the evening gales along,
Recall some echo, in their years to be,
Of not all-perished song;

Taking some spark to glad the hearth, or light
The student-lamp from now-neglected fires;—
And one sad memory in the Sons requite
What—I forgive the Sires!

THE END.

T. C. Savill, Printer, 107, St. Martin's Lane.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016